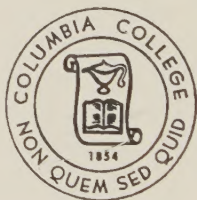


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DOORSTEP ACQUAINTANCE

AND OTHER SKETCHES

BY

WILLIAM D. HOWELLS

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES



HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

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BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE author of the sketches here gathered has written a long series of poems, novels, sketches, stories, and essays, and has been perhaps the most continuous worker in the literary art among American writers. He was born at Martin's Ferry, Belmont County, Ohio, March 1, 1837, and the experiences of his early life have been delightfully told by himself in *A Boy's Town*, *My Year in a Log Cabin*, and *My Literary Passions*. These books, which seem like pastimes in the midst of Howells's serious work, are likely to live long, not only as playful autobiographic records, but as vivid pictures of life in the middle west in the middle of the nineteenth century. The boy lived in a home where frugality was the law of economy, but where high ideals of noble living were cheerfully maintained, and the very occupations of the household tended to stimulate literary activity. He read voraciously and with an instinctive scent for what was great and permanent in literature, and in his father's printing-office learned to set type, and soon to make contributions to the local journals. He went to the state Capitol to report the proceedings of the legislature, and before he was twenty-two had become news editor of the *State Journal* of Columbus, Ohio.

But at the same time he had given clear intimations of his literary skill, and had contributed several poems to the *Atlantic Monthly*. His introduction to litera-

ture was in the stirring days just before the war for the Union, and he had a generous enthusiasm for the great principles which were then at stake. Yet the political leaven chiefly caused the bread he was baking to rise, and his native genius was distinctly for work in creative literature. His contribution to the political writing of the day, besides his newspaper work, was a small campaign life of Lincoln, and shortly after the incoming of the first Republican administration he received the appointment of consul at Venice.

At Venice he remained from 1861 to 1865, and these years may fairly be taken as standing for his university training. He carried with him to Europe some conversance with French, German, Spanish, and Italian, and an insatiable thirst for literature in these languages. Naturally now he concentrated his attention on the Italian language and literature, but after all he was not made for a microscopic or encyclopædic scholar, least of all for a pedant. What he was looking for in literature, though he scarcely so stated it to himself at the time, was human life, and it was this first-hand acquaintance he was acquiring with life in another circumstance that constituted his real training in literature. To pass from Ohio straight to Italy, with the merest alighting by the way in New York and Boston, was to be transported from one world to another; but he carried with him a mind which had already become naturalized in the large world of history and men through the literature in which he had steeped his mind. No one can read the record of the books he had revelled in, and observe the agility with which he was absorbed, successively, in books of greatly varying character, without perceiving how wide open were the windows of his mind; and as the light

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

streamed in from all these heavens, so the inmate looked out with unaffected interest on the views spread before him.

Thus it was that Italy and Venice in particular afforded him at once the greatest delight and also the surest test of his growing power. The swift observation he had shown in literature became an equally rapid survey of all these novel forms before him. The old life embedded in this historic country became the book whose leaves he turned, but he looked with the greatest interest and most sympathetic scrutiny on that which passed before his eyes. It was novel, it was quaint, it was filled with curious, unexpected betrayals of human nature, but it was above all real, actual, a thing to be touched and as it were fondled by hands that were deft by nature and were quickly becoming more skilful by use. Mr. Howells began to write letters home which were printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, and grew easily into a book which still remains in the minds of many of his readers the freshest of all his writings, *Venetian Life*. This was followed shortly by *Italian Journeys*, in which Mr. Howells gathered his observations made in going from place to place in Italy. The piece "At Padua" is from this latter volume. A good many years later, after returning to the country of his affection, he wrote a third book of a similar character under the title of *Tuscan Cities*. But his use of Italy in literature was not confined to books of travels; he made and published studies of Italian literature, and he wove the life of the country into fiction in a charming manner. The slight sketch which appears in this collection, "Tonelli's Marriage," is an instance of a use of Italy in fiction which is little more than a bit

of embroidery on the plain cloth of matter of fact. Richer illustrations may be found in *A Foregone Conclusion*, one of the happiest of his novels, whose scene is laid in Venice, and in *The Lady of the Arcs-took*.

When Mr. Howells returned to America at the close of his term as consul, he found warm friends whom he had made through his writings. He served for a short time on the staff of *The Nation*, of New York, and then was invited to Boston to take the position of assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* under Mr. Fields. This was in 1866, and five years later, on the retirement of Mr. Fields, he became editor, and remained in the position until 1881, living during this period in Cambridge. He was not only editor of the magazine; he was really its chief contributor. Any one who takes the trouble to examine the pages of the published *Atlantic Index* will see how far his work outnumbers in titles that of all other contributors, and the range of his work was great.

He wrote a large proportion of the reviews of books, which in those days constituted a marked feature of the magazine. These reviews were conscientiously written, and showed penetration and justice, but they had besides a felicitous and playful touch which rendered them delightful reading, even though one knew little or cared little for the book reviewed. Sometimes, though not often, he wrote poems, but readers soon learned to look with eagerness for a kind of writing which seemed almost more individual with him than any other form of writing. We mean the humorous sketches of every-day life, in which he took scenes of the commonest sort and drew from them an inherent life which most never suspected, yet confessed the mo-

ment he disclosed it. He would do such a commonplace thing as take an excursion down the harbor, or even a ride to town in a horse-car, and come back to turn his experience into a piece of genuine literature, like "A Day's Pleasure," for instance. A number of these pieces were collected into a volume entitled *Suburban Sketches*, and out of that have been taken "Doorstep Acquaintance" and "A Romance of Real Life."

It is interesting to observe how slowly yet surely Mr. Howells drew near the great field of novel-writing, and how deliberately he laid the foundations of his art. First, the graceful sketch which was hardly more than a leaf out of his note-book; then the blending of travel with character-drawing, as in *A Chance Acquaintance* and *Their Wedding Journey*, and later stories of people who moved about and thus found the incidents which the author had not to invent, as in *The Lady of the Aroostook*. Meanwhile, the eye which had taken note of surface effects was beginning to look deeper into the springs of being, and the hand which had described was beginning to model figures also which stood alone.

So there followed a number of little dramatic sketches, where the persons of the drama carried on their little play; and since they were not on a stage before the spectator, the author constructed a sort of literary stage for the reader; that is to say, he supplied by paragraphs what in a regular play would be stage directions. This is seen in such little comedies as *A Counterfeit Presentment*, which, indeed, was put on the stage. But instead of pushing forward on this line into the field of great drama, Mr. Howells contented himself with dexterous strokes with a fine pen,

so to speak, and created a number of sparkling farces like *The Parlor Car*.

The real issue of all this practice in the dramatic art was to disengage the characters he created from too close dependence on the kind of circumstance, as of travel, which the author did not invent, and to give them substantial life in the working out of the drama of their spiritual evolution. Thus by the time he was released from editorial work, Mr. Howells was ready for the thorough-going novel, and he gave to readers such examples of art as *A Modern Instance*, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, and that most important of all his novels, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. By the time this last novel was written, he had become thoroughly interested, not merely in the men, women, and children about him, but in that mysterious, complex order named by us society, with its roots matted together as in a swamp, and seeming to many to be sucking up maleficent, miasmatic vapors from the soil in which it was rooted. Like many another lover of his kind, he has sought to trace the evils of individual life to their source in this composite order, and to guess at the mode by which society shall right itself and drink up healthy and life-giving virtues from the soil.

But it must not be inferred that his novels and other literary work have been by any means exclusively concerned with the reconstruction of the social order. He has indeed experimented with this theme, but he has always had a sane interest in life as he sees it, and with the increasing scope of his observation he has drawn his figures from a larger world, which includes indeed the world in which he first began to find his characters and their action.

Not long after retiring from the *Atlantic* he went

to live in New York, and varied his American experience with frequent travels and continued residence in Europe. For a while he maintained a department in *Harper's Monthly*, where he gave expression to his views on literature and the dramatic art, and for a short period returned to the editorial life in conducting *The Cosmopolitan*; lately, also, he has entered the field of lecturing, and thus has constantly extended the range of his observation. This in fine is the most summary statement of his career in literature, — that he has been a keen and sympathetic observer of life, and has caught its character, not like a reporter going about with a kodak and snapping it aimlessly at any conspicuous object, but like an alert artist who goes back to his studio after a walk and sets down his comments on what he has seen in quick, accurate sketches, now and then resolving numberless undrawn sketches into some one comprehensive and beautiful picture.

H. E. S.

DOORSTEP ACQUAINTANCE AND OTHER SKETCHES.

DOORSTEP ACQUAINTANCE.

VAGABONDS the world would no doubt call many of my doorstep acquaintance, and I do not attempt to defend them altogether against the world, which paints but black and white and in general terms. Yet I would fain veil what is only half-truth under another name, for I know that the service of their Gay Science¹ is not one of such disgraceful ease as we associate with ideas of vagrancy, though I must own that they lead the life they do because they love it. They always protest that nothing but their ignorance of our tongue prevents them from practising some mechanical trade. "What work could be harder," they ask, "than carrying this organ about all day?" but while I answer with honesty that nothing can be more irksome, I feel that they only pretend a disgust with it, and that they really like organ-grinding, if for no other reason than that they are the children of the summer, and it takes them into the beloved open weather. One of my friends, at least, who in the warmer months is to all appearance a blithesome troubadour, living

"A merry life in sun and shade,"

¹ The term is applied to literature, especially poetry, and is practically equivalent to the technical term *Æsthetics*.

is a coal-heaver in winter ; and though this more honorable and useful occupation is doubtless open to him the whole year round, yet he does not devote himself to it, but prefers with the expanding spring to lay aside his grimy basket, and, shouldering his organ, to quit the dismal wharves and carts and cellars, and to wander forth into the suburbs, with his lazy, soft-eyed boy at his heels, who does nothing with his tambourine but take up a collection, and who, meeting me the other day in a chance passage of Ferry Street, knew me, and gave me so much of his father's personal history.

It was winter even there in Ferry Street, in which so many Italians live that one might think to find it under a softer sky and in a gentler air, and which I had always figured in a wide unlikeness to all other streets in Boston, — with houses stuccoed outside, and with gratings at their ground-floor windows ; with mouldering archways between the buildings, and at the corners feeble lamps glimmering before pictures of the Madonna ; with weather-beaten shutters flapping overhead, and many balconies from which hung the linen swathings of young infants, and love-making maidens furtively lured the velvet-jacketed, leisurely youth below : a place haunted by windy voices of blessing and cursing, with the perpetual clack of wooden-heeled shoes upon the stones, and what perfume from the blossom of vines and almond-trees, mingling with less delicate smells, the travelled reader pleases to imagine. I do not say that I found Ferry Street actually different from this vision in most respects ; but as for the vines and almond-trees, they were not in bloom at the moment of my encounter with the little tambourine-boy. As we stood and talked, the snow fell as heavily and thickly around us as else-

where in Boston. With a vague pain, — the envy of a race toward another born to a happier clime, — I heard from him that his whole family was going back to Italy in a month. The father had at last got together money enough, and the mother, who had long been an invalid, must be taken home; and, so far as I know, the population of Ferry Street exists but in the hope of a return, soon or late, to the native or the ancestral land.

More than one of my doorstep acquaintance, in fact, seemed to have no other stock in trade than this fond desire, and to thrive with it in our sympathetic community. It is scarcely possible but the reader has met the widow of Giovanni Cascamatto, a Vesuvian lunatic who has long set fire to their home on the slopes of the volcano, and perished in the flames. She was our first Italian acquaintance in Charlesbridge, presenting herself with a little subscription-book which she sent in for inspection, with a printed certificate to the facts of her history signed with the somewhat conventionally Saxon names of William Tompkins and John Johnson. These gentlemen set forth, in terms vaguer than can be reproduced, that her object in coming to America was to get money to go back to Italy; and the whole document had so fictitious an air that it made us doubt even the nationality of the bearer; but we were put to shame by the decent joy she manifested in an Italian salutation. There was no longer a question of imposture in anybody's mind; we gladly paid tribute to her poetic fiction, and she thanked us with a tranquil courtesy that placed the obligation where it belonged. As she turned to go with many good wishes, we pressed her to have some dinner, but she answered with a compliment insurpass-

ably flattering, she had just dined — in another palace. The truth is, there is not a single palace on Benicia Street, and our little box of pine and paper would hardly have passed for a palace on the stage, where these things are often contrived with great simplicity; but as we had made a little Italy together, she touched it with the exquisite politeness of her race, and it became for the instant a lordly mansion, standing on the Chiaja, or the Via Nuovissima, or the CanaLazzo.

I say this woman seemed glad to be greeted in Italian, but not, so far as I could see, surprised; and altogether the most amazing thing about my doorstep acquaintance of her nation is, that they are never surprised to be spoken to in their own tongue, or, if they are, never show it. A chestnut-roaster, who has sold me twice the chestnuts the same money would have bought of him in English, has not otherwise recognized the fact that Tuscan is not the dialect of Charles-bridge, and the mortifying nonchalance with which my advances have always been received has long since persuaded me that to the grinder at the gate it is not remarkable that a man should open the door of his wooden house on Benicia Street, and welcome him in his native language. After the first shock of this indifference is past, it is not to be questioned but it flatters with an illusion, which a stare of amazement would forbid, reducing the encounter to a vulgar reality at once, and I could almost believe it in those wily and amiable folk to intend the sweeter effect of their unconcern, which tacitly implies that there is no other tongue in the world but Italian, and which makes all the earth and air Italian for the time. Nothing else could have been the purpose of that image-dealer whom

I saw on a summer's day lying at the foot of one of our meeting-houses, and doing his best to make it a cathedral, and really giving a sentiment of mediæval art to the noble sculptures of the façades which the carpenters had just nailed up, freshly painted and newly repaired. This poet was stretched upon his back, eating, in that convenient posture, his dinner out of an earthen pot, plucking the viand from it, whatever it was, with his thumb and forefinger, and dropping it piecemeal into his mouth. When the passer asked him "Where are you from?" he held a morsel in air long enough to answer "Da Lucca, signore," and then let it fall into his throat, and sank deeper into a reverie in which that crude accent even must have sounded like a gossip's or a kinsman's voice, but never otherwise moved muscle, nor looked to see who passed or lingered. There could have been little else in his circumstances to remind him of home, and if he was really in the sort of day-dream attributed to him, he was wise not to look about him. I have not myself been in Lucca, but I conceive that its piazza is not like our square, with a pump and horse-trough in the midst; but that it has probably a fountain and statuary, though not possibly so magnificent an elm¹ towering above the bronze or marble groups as spreads its boughs of benison over our pump and the horse-car switchman, loitering near it to set the switch for the arriving cars, or lift the brimming buckets to the smoking nostrils of the horses, while out from the stable comes clanging and banging with a fresh team that famous African who has turned white, or, if he is off duty, one of his brethren who has

¹ When this sketch was written, these were familiar objects in Harvard Square, Cambridge, but they long since disappeared before the energy of the electric road.

not yet begun to turn. Figure, besides, an expressman watering his horse at the trough, a provision-cart backed up against the curb in front of one of the stores, various people looking from the car-office windows, and a conductor appearing at the door long enough to call out, "Ready for Boston!" — and you have a scene of such gayety as Lucca could never have witnessed in her piazza at high noon on a summer's day. Even our Campo Santo, if the Lucchese had cared to look round the corner of the meeting-house at its moss-grown headstones, could have had little to remind him of home, though it has antiquity and a proper quaintness. But not for him, not for them of his clime and faith, is the pathos of those simple memorial slates with their winged skulls, changing upon many later stones, as if by the softening of creeds and customs, to cherub's heads, — not for him is the pang I feel because of those who died, in our country's youth, exiles or exiles' children, heirs of the wilderness and toil and hardship.¹ Could they rise from their restful beds, and look on this wandering Italian with his plaster statuettes of Apollo, and Canovan dancers and deities, they would hold his wares little better than Romish saints and idolatries, and would scarcely have the sentimental interest in him felt by the modern citizen of Charlesbridge; but I think that even they must have respected that Lombard scissors-grinder who used to come to us, and put an edge to all the cutlery in the house.

He has since gone back to Milan, whence he came eighteen years ago, and whither he has returned, —

¹ There are pleasant glimpses of this Campo Santo in Longfellow's poem, "In the Churchyard at Cambridge," and Holmes's "The Cambridge Churchyard."

as he told me one acute day in the fall, when all the winter hinted itself, and the painted leaves shuddered earthward in the grove across the way, — to enjoy a little climate before he died (*per goder un po' di clima prima di morire*). Our climate was the only thing he had against us; in every other respect he was a New-Englander, even to the early stages of consumption. He told me the story of his whole life, and of how in his adventurous youth he had left Milan and sojourned some years in Naples, vainly seeking his fortune there. Afterwards he went to Greece, and set up his ancestral business of green-grocer in Athens, faring there no better, but rather worse than in Naples, because of the deeper wickedness of the Athenians, who cheated him right and left, and whose laws gave him no redress. The Neapolitans were bad enough, he said, making a wry face, but the Greeks! — and he spat the Greeks out on the grass. At last, after much misfortune in Europe, he bethought him of coming to America, and he had never regretted it, but for the climate. You spent a good deal here, — nearly all you earned, — but then a poor man was a man, and the people were honest. It was wonderful to him that they all knew how to read and write, and he viewed with inexpressible scorn those Irish who came to this country, and were so little sensible of the benefits it conferred upon them. Boston he believed the best city in America, and “Tell me,” said he, “is there such a thing anywhere else in the world as that Public Library?” He, a poor man, and almost unknown, had taken books from it to his own room, and was master to do so whenever he liked. He had thus been enabled to read Botta’s history of the United States,

an enormous compliment both to the country and the work, which I doubt ever to have been paid before ; and he knew more about Washington than I did, and desired to know more than I could tell him of the financial question among us. So we came to national politics, and then to European affairs. "It appears that Garibaldi will not go to Rome this year," remarks my scissors-grinder, who is very red in his sympathies. "The Emperor forbids ! Well, patience ! And that blessed Pope, what does he want, that Pope ? He will be king and priest both, he will wear two pairs of shoes at once !" I must confess that no other of my doorstep acquaintance had so clear an idea as this one of the difference between things here and at home. To the minds of most we seemed divided here as there into rich and poor, — *signori*, *persone civili*, and *povera gente*, — and their thoughts about us did not go beyond a speculation as to our individual willingness or ability to pay for organ-grinding. But this Lombard was worthy of his adopted country, and I forgive him the frank expression of a doubt that one day occurred to him, when offered a glass of Italian wine. He held it daintily between him and the sun for a smiling moment, and then said, as if our wine must needs be as unguine as our Italian, — was perhaps some expression from the surrounding currant-bushes, harsh as that from the Northern tongues which could never give his language the true life and tonic charm, — "But I suppose this wine is not made of grapes, signor ?" Yet he was a very courteous old man, elaborate in greeting and leave-taking, and with a quicker sense than usual. It was accounted delicacy in him, that, when he had bidden us a final adieu, he should never come near us again, though the date

of his departure was postponed some weeks, and we heard him tinkling down the street, and stopping at the neighbors' houses. He was a keen-faced, thoughtful-looking man; and he wore a blouse of blue cotton, from the pocket of which always dangled the leaves of some wild salad culled from our wasteful vacant lots or prodigal waysides.

Altogether different in character was that Triestine, who came one evening to be helped home at the close of a very disastrous career in Mexico. He was a person of innumerable bows, and fluttered his bright-colored compliments about, till it appeared that never before had such amiable people been asked charity by such a worthy and generous sufferer. In Trieste he had been a journalist, and it was evident enough from his speech that he was of a good education. He was vain of his Italian accent, which was peculiarly good for his heterogeneously peopled native city; and he made a show of that marvellous facility of the Triestines in languages, by taking me down French books, Spanish books, German books, and reading from them all with the properest accent. Yet with this boyish pride and self-satisfaction there was mixed a tone of bitter and worldly cynicism, a belief in fortune as the sole providence. As nearly as I could make out, he was a Johnson¹ man in American politics; upon the Mexican question he was independent, disdaining French and Mexicans alike. He was with the former from the first, and had continued in the service of Maximilian after their withdrawal, till the execution of that prince made Mexico no place for adventurous merit. He was now going back to his native country, an ungrateful land enough, which had ill treated him

¹ This fixes the date of the reminiscence.

long ago, but to which he nevertheless returned in a perfect gayety of temper. What a light-hearted rogue he was, — with such merry eyes, and such a pleasant smile shaping his neatly trimmed beard and mustache! After he had supped, and he stood with us at the door taking leave, something happened to be said of Italian songs, whereupon this blithe exile, whom the compassion of strangers was enabling to go home after many years of unprofitable toil and danger to a country that had loved him not, fell to carolling a Venetian barcarolle, and went sweetly away in its cadence. I bore him company as far as the gate of another Italian-speaking signor, and was there bidden adieu with great effusion, so that I forgot till he had left me to charge him not to be in fear of the house-dog, which barked but did not bite. In calling this after him, I had the misfortune to blunder in my verb. A man of another nation — perhaps another man of his own nation — would have cared rather for what I said than how I said it; but he, as if too zealous for the honor of his beautiful language to endure a hurt to it even in that moment of grief, lifting his hat, and bowing for the last time, responded with a “*Morde, non morsica, signore!*” and passed in under the pines, and next day to Italy.

There is a little old Genoese lady comes to sell us pins, needles, thread, tape, and the like *roba*, whom I regard as leading quite an ideal life in some respects. Her traffic is limited to a certain number of families who speak more or less Italian; and her days, so far as they are concerned, must be passed in an atmosphere of sympathy and kindness. The truth is, we Northern and New World folk cannot help but cast a little romance about whoever comes to us from Italy, whether

we have actually known the beauty and charm of that land or not. Then this old lady is in herself a very gentle and lovable kind of person, with a tender mother-face, which is also the face of a child. A smile plays always upon her wrinkled visage, and her quick and restless eyes are full of friendliness. There is never much stuff in her basket, however, and it is something of a mystery how she manages to live from it. None but an Italian could, I am sure; and her experience must test the full virtue of the national genius for cheap salads and much-extenuated soup-meat. I do not know whether it is native in her, or whether it is a grace acquired from long dealing with those kindly hearted customers of hers in Charles-bridge, but she is of a most munificent spirit, and returns every smallest benefit with some present from her basket. She makes me ashamed of things I have written about the sordidness of her race, but I shall vainly seek to atone for them by open-handedness to her. She will give favor for favor; she will not even count the money she receives; our bargaining is a contest of the courtliest civilities, ending in many an "Adieu!" "To meet again!" "Remain well!" and "Finally!" not surpassed if rivalled in any Italian street. In her ineffectual way, she brings us news of her different customers, breaking up their stout Saxon names into tinkling polysyllables which suggest them only to the practised sense, and is perfectly patient and contented if we mistake one for another. She loves them all, but she pities them as living in a terrible climate; and doubtless in her heart she purposes one day to go back to Italy, there to die. In the mean time she is very cheerful; she, too, has had her troubles, — what troubles I do not remember, but those

that come by sickness and by death, and that really seem no sorrows until they come to us, — yet she never complains. It is hard to make a living, and the house-rent alone is six dollars a month ; but still one lives, and does not fare so ill either. As it does not seem to be in her to dislike any one, it must be out of a harmless guile, felt to be comforting to servant-ridden householders, that she always speaks of “ those Irish,” her neighbors, with a bated breath, a shaken head, a hand lifted to the cheek, and an averted countenance.

Swarthiest of the organ-grinding tribe is he who peers up at my window out of infinitesimal black eyes, perceives me, louts low, and for form’s sake grinds me out a tune before he begins to talk. As we parley together, say it is eleven o’clock in the forenoon, and a sober tranquillity reigns upon the dust and nodding weeds of Benicia Street. At that hour the organ-grinder and I are the only persons of our sex in the whole suburban population ; all other husbands and fathers having eaten their breakfasts at seven o’clock, and stood up in the early horse-cars to Boston, whence they will return, with aching backs and quivering calves, half-pendent by leathern straps from the roofs of the same luxurious conveyances, in the evening. The Italian might go and grind his organ upon the front stoop of any one of a hundred French-roof houses around, and there would be no arm within strong enough to thrust him thence ; but he is a gentleman in his way, and, as he prettily explains, he never stops to play except where the window smiles on him : a frowning lattice he will pass in silence. I behold in him a disappointed man, — a man broken in health, and of a liver baked by long sojourn in a tropical clime. In

large and dim outline, made all the dimmer by his dialect, he sketches me the story of his life; how in his youth he ran away from the Milanese for love of a girl in France, who, dying, left him with so little purpose in the world that, after working at his trade of plasterer for some years in Lyons, he listened to a certain gentleman going out upon government service to a French colony in South America. This gentleman wanted a man-servant, and he said to my organ-grinder, "Go with me and I make your fortune." So he, who cared not whither he went, went, and found himself in the tropics. It was a hard life he led there; and of the wages that had seemed so great in France, he paid nearly half to his laundress alone, being forced to be neat in his master's house. The service was not so irksome in-doors, but it was the hunting beasts in the forest all day that broke his patience at last.

"Beasts in the forest?" I ask, forgetful of the familiar sense of *bestie*, and figuring cougars at least by the word.

"Yes, those little beasts for the naturalists, — flies, bugs, beetles, — Heaven knows what."

"But this brought you money?"

"It brought my master money, but me aches and pains as many as you will, and at last the fever. When that was burnt out, I made up my mind to ask for more pay, and, not getting it, to quit that service. I think the signor would have given it, — but the signora! So I left, empty as I came, and was cook on a vessel to New York."

This was the black and white of the man's story. I lose the color and atmosphere which his manner as well as his words bestowed upon it. He told it in a cheerful, impersonal kind of way as the romance of a

poor devil which had interested him, and might possibly amuse me, leaving out no touch of character in his portrait of the fat, selfish master, — yielding enough, however, but for his grasping wife, who, with all her avarice and greed, he yet confessed to be very handsome. By the wave of a hand he housed them in a tropic residence, dim, cool, close shut, kept by servants in white linen moving with mute slippered feet over stone floors ; and by another gesture he indicated the fierce thorny growths of the forest in which he hunted those vivid insects, — the luxuriant savannas, the gigantic ferns and palms, the hush and shining desolation, the presence of the invisible fever and death. There was a touch, too, of inexpressible sadness in his half-ignorant mention of the exiles at Cayenne, who were forbidden the wide ocean of escape about them by those swift gunboats keeping their coasts and swooping down upon every craft that left the shore. He himself had seen one such capture, and he made me see it, and the mortal despair of the fugitives, standing upright in their boat with the idle oars in their unconscious hands, while the corvette swept toward them.

For all his misfortunes, he was not cast down. He had that lightness of temper which seems proper to most northern Italians, whereas those from the south are usually dark-mooded, sad-faced men. Nothing surpasses for unstudied misanthropy of expression the visages of different Neapolitan harpers who have visited us ; but they have some right to their dejected countenances as being of a yet half-civilized stock, and as real artists and men of genius. Nearly all wandering violinists, as well as harpers, are of their race, and they are of every age, from that of mere children to

men in their prime. They are very rarely old, as many of the organ-grinders are ; they are not so handsome as the Italians of the north, though they have invariably fine eyes. They arrive in twos and threes ; the violinist briefly tunes his fiddle, and the harper unslings his instrument, and, with faces of profound gloom, they go through their repertory, — pieces from the great composers, airs from the opera, not unmingled with such efforts of Anglo-Saxon genius as Champagne Charley and Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines, which, like the language of Shakespeare and Milton, hold us and our English cousins in tender bonds of mutual affection. Beyond the fact that they come “dal Basilicat’,” or “dal Principat’,” one gets very little out of these Neapolitans, though I dare say they are not so surly at heart as they look. Money does not brighten them to the eye, but yet it touches them, and they are good in playing or leaving off to him that pays. Long time two of them stood between the gateway firs on a pleasant summer’s afternoon and twanged and scraped their harmonious strings, till all the idle boys of the neighborhood gathered about them, listening with a grave and still delight. It was a most serious company : the Neapolitans, with their cloudy brows, rapt in their music ; and the Yankee children, with their impassive faces, warily guarding against the faintest expression of enjoyment ; and when at last the minstrels played a brisk measure, and the music began to work in the blood of the boys, and one of them, shuffling his reluctant feet upon the gravel, broke into a sudden and resistless dance, the spectacle became too sad for contemplation. The boy danced only from the hips down ; no expression of his face gave the levity sanction, nor did any of his comrades : they beheld

him with a silent fascination, but none was infected by the solemn indecorum ; and when the legs and music ceased their play together, no comment was made, and the dancer turned unheated away. A chance passer asked for what he called the Gearybaldeye Hymn, but the Neapolitans apparently did not know what this was.

My doorstep acquaintance were not all of one race ; now and then an alien to the common Italian tribe appeared, — an Irish soldier, on his way to Salem, and willing to show me more of his mutilation than I cared to buy the sight of for twenty-five cents ; and more rarely yet an American, also formerly of the army, but with something besides his wretchedness to sell. On the hottest day of last summer such a one rang the bell, and was discovered on the threshold wiping with his poor sole hand the sweat that stood upon his forehead. There was still enough of the independent citizen in his maimed and emaciated person to inspire him with deliberation and a show of that indifference with which we Americans like to encounter each other ; but his voice was rather faint when he asked if I supposed we wanted any starch to-day.

“ Yes, certainly,” answered what heart there was within, taking note wilfully, but I hope not wantonly, what an absurdly limp figure he was for a peddler of starch, — “ certainly from you, brave fellow ; ” and the package being taken from his basket, the man turned to go away, so very wearily, that a cheap philanthropy protested : “ For shame ! ask him to sit down in-doors and drink a glass of water.”

“ No,” answered the poor fellow, when this indignant voice had been obeyed, and he had been taken at a disadvantage, and as it were surprised into the confession,

"my family had n't any breakfast this morning, and I've got to hurry back to them."

"Have n't *you* had any breakfast?"

"Well, I wa'n't rightly hungry when I left the house."

"Here, now," popped in the virtue before named, "is an opportunity to discharge the debt we all owe to the brave fellows who gave us back our country. Make it beer."

So it was made beer and bread and cold meat, and, after a little pressing, the honest soul consented to the refreshment. He sat down in a cool doorway and began to eat and to tell of the fight before Vicksburg. And if you have never seen a one-armed soldier making a meal, I can assure you the sight is a pathetic one, and is rendered none the cheerfuller by his memories of the fights that mutilated him. This man had no very susceptible audience, but before he was carried off the field, shot through the body, and in the arm and foot, he had sold every package of starch in his basket. I am ashamed to say this now, for I suspect that a man with one arm, who indulged himself in going about under that broiling sun of July, peddling starch, was very probably an impostor. He computed a good day's profits of seventy-five cents, and when asked if that was not very little for the support of a sick wife and three children, he answered with a quaint effort at impressiveness, and with a trick, as I imagined, from the manner of the regimental chaplain, "You've done your duty, my friend, and more 'n your duty. If every one did their duty like that, we should get along." So he took leave, and shambled out into the furnace-heat, the sun beating upon his pale face, and his linen coat hugging him close, but with his basket lighter, and I

hope his heart also. At any rate, this was the sentiment which cheap philanthropy offered in self-gratulation, as he passed out of sight: "There! you are quits with those maimed soldiers at last, and you have a country which you have paid for with cold victuals as they with blood."

We have been a good deal visited by one disbanded volunteer, not to the naked eye maimed, nor apparently suffering from any lingering illness, yet who bears, as he tells me, a secret disabling wound in his side from a spent shell, and who is certainly a prey to the most acute form of shiftlessness. I do not recall with exactness the date of our acquaintance, but it was one of those pleasant August afternoons when a dinner eaten in peace fills the digester with a millennial tenderness for the race too rarely felt in the nineteenth century. At such a moment it is a more natural action to loosen than to tighten the purse-strings, and when a very neatly dressed young man presented himself at the gate, and in a note of indescribable plaintiveness asked if I had any little job for him to do that he might pay for a night's lodging, I looked about the small domain with a vague longing to find some part of it in disrepair, and experienced a moment's absurd relief when he hinted that he would be willing to accept fifty cents in pledge of future service. Yet this was not the right principle: some work, real or apparent, must be done for the money, and the veteran was told that he might weed the strawberry bed, though, as matters then stood, it was clean enough for a strawberry bed that never bore anything. The veteran was neatly dressed, as I have said: his coat, which was good, was buttoned to the throat for reasons that shall be sacred against curiosity, and he had on a perfectly

clean paper collar; he was a handsome young fellow, with regular features, and a solicitously kept imperial and mustache; his hair, when he lifted his hat, appeared elegantly oiled and brushed. I did not hope from this figure that the work done would be worth the money paid, and as nearly as I can compute, the weeds he took from that bed cost me a cent apiece, to say nothing of a cup of tea given him in grace at the end of his labors.

My acquaintance was, as the reader will be glad to learn, a native American, though it is to be regretted, for the sake of facts which his case went far to establish, that he was not a New-Englander by birth. The most that could be claimed was, that he came to Boston from Delaware when very young, and that there on that brine-washed granite he had grown as perfect a flower of helplessness and indolence, as fine a fruit of maturing civilization, as ever expanded or ripened in Latin lands. He lived, not only a protest in flesh and blood against the tendency of democracy to exclude mere beauty from our system, but a refutation of those Old World observers, who deny to our vulgar and bustling communities the refining and elevating grace of Repose. There was something very curious and original in his character, from which the sentiment of shame was absent, but which was not lacking in the fine instincts of personal cleanliness, of dress, of style. There was nothing of the rowdy in him; he was gentle as an Italian noble in his manners: what other traits they may have had in common, I do not know; perhaps an amiable habit of illusion. He was always going to bring me his discharge papers, but he never did, though he came often and had many a pleasant night's sleep at my cost. If sometimes he did a little work,

he spent great part of the time contracted to me in the kitchen, where it was understood, quite upon his own agency, that his wages included board. At other times, he called for money too late in the evening to work it out that day, and it has happened that a new second girl, deceived by his genteel appearance in the uncertain light, has shown him into the parlor, where I have found him to his and my own great amusement, as the gentleman who wanted to see me. Nothing else seemed to raise his ordinarily dejected spirits so much. We all know how pleasant it is to laugh at people behind their backs; but this veteran afforded me at a very low rate the luxury of a fellow-being whom one might laugh at to his face as much as one liked.

Yet with all his shamelessness, his pensiveness, his elegance, I felt that somehow our national triumph was not complete in him, — that there were yet more finished forms of self-abasement in the Old World, till one day I looked out of the window and saw at a little distance my veteran digging a cellar for an Irishman. I own that the spectacle gave me a shock of pleasure, and that I ran down to have a nearer view of what human eyes have seldom, if ever, beheld, — an American, pure blood, handling the pick, the shovel, and the wheelbarrow, while an Irishman directed his labors. Upon inspection, it appeared that none of the trees grew with their roots in the air, in recognition of this great reversal of the natural law; all the French-roof houses stood right side up. The phenomenon may become more common in future, unless the American race accomplishes its destiny of dying out before the more populatory foreigner, but as yet it graced the veteran with an exquisite and signal distinction. He, however, seemed to feel unpleasantly the anomaly of his case, and

opened the conversation by saying that he should not work at that job to-morrow, it hurt his side ; and went on to complain of the inhumanity of Americans to Americans. " Why," said he, " they 'd rather give out their jobs to a nigger than to one of their own kind. I was beatin' carpets for a gentleman on the Avenue, and the first thing I know he give most of 'em to a nigger. I beat seven of 'em in one day, and got two dollars ; and the nigger beat 'em by the piece, and he got a dollar an' a half apiece. My luck ! "

Here the Irishman glanced at his hireling, and the rueful veteran hastened to pile up another wheelbarrow with earth. If ever we come to reverse positions generally with our Irish brethren, there is no doubt but they will get more work out of us than we do from them at present.

It was shortly after this that the veteran offered to do second girl's work in my house if I would take him. The place was not vacant ; and as the summer was now drawing to a close, and I feared to be left with him on my hands for the winter, it seemed well to speak to him upon the subject of economy. The next time he called, I had not about me the exact sum for a night's lodging, — fifty cents, namely, — and asked him if he thought a dollar would do. He smiled sadly, as if he did not like jesting upon such a very serious subject, but said he allowed to work it out, and took it.

" Now, I hope you won't think I am interfering with your affairs," said his benefactor, " but I really think you are a very poor financier. According to your own account, you have been going on from year to year for a long time, trusting to luck for a night's lodging. Sometimes I suppose you have to sleep out-of-doors."

"No, never!" answered the veteran, with something like scorn. "I *never* sleep out-doors. I would n't do it."

"Well, at any rate, some one has to pay for your lodging. Don't you think you'd come cheaper to your friends, if, instead of going to a hotel every night, you'd take a room somewhere, and pay for it by the month?"

"I've thought of that. If I could get a good bed, I'd try it awhile anyhow. You see the hotels have raised. I used to get a lodgin' and a nice breakfast for a half a dollar, but now it is as much as you can do to get a lodgin' for the money, and it's just as dear in the Port as it is in the city. I've tried hotels pretty much everywhere, and one's about as bad as another."

If he had been a travelled Englishman writing a book, he could not have spoken of hotels with greater disdain.

"You see, the trouble with me is, I ain't got any relations around here. Now," he added, with the life and eagerness of an inspiration, "if I had a mother and sister livin' down at the Port, say, I would n't go hunting about for these mean little jobs everywheres. I'd just lay round home, and wait till something come up big. What I want is a home."

At the instigation of a malignant spirit I asked the homeless orphan, "Why don't you get married, then?"

He gave me another smile, sadder, fainter, sweeter than before, and said: "When would you like to see me again, so I could work out this dollar?"

A sudden and unreasonable disgust for the character which had given me so much entertainment suc-

ceeded to my past delight. I felt, moreover, that I had bought the right to use some frankness with the veteran, and I said to him: "Do you know now, I should n't care if I *never* saw you again?"

I can only conjecture that he took the confidence in good part, for he did not appear again after that.

TONELLI'S MARRIAGE.

THERE was no richer man in Venice than Tommaso Tonelli, who had enough on his florin a day ; and none younger than he, who owned himself forty-seven years old. He led the cheerfullest life in the world, and was quite a monster of content ; but when I come to sum up his pleasures, I fear that I shall appear to my readers to be celebrating a very insipid and monotonous existence. I doubt even if a summary of his duties could be made attractive to the conscientious imagination of hard-working people ; for Tonelli's labors were not killing, nor, for that matter, were those of any Venetian that I ever knew. He had a stated employment in the office of the notary Cenarotti ; and he passed there so much of every working day as lies between nine and five o'clock, writing upon deeds and conveyances and petitions and other legal instruments for the notary, who sat in an adjoining room, secluded from nearly everything in this world but snuff. He called Tonelli by the sound of a little bell ; and, when he turned to take a paper from his safe, he seemed to be abstracting some secret from long-lapsed centuries, which he restored again, and locked back among the dead ages when his clerk replaced the document in his hands. These hands were very soft and pale, and their owner was a colorless old man, whose silvery hair fell down a face nearly as white ; but, as he has almost nothing to do with the present affair, I shall merely say that, having been compromised in the last revolu-

tion, he had been obliged to live ever since in perfect retirement, and that he seemed to have been blanched in this social darkness as a plant is blanched by growth in a cellar. His enemies said that he was naturally a timid man, but they could not deny that he had seen things to make the brave afraid, or that he had now every reason from the police to be secret and cautious in his life. He could hardly be called company for Tonelli, who must have found the day intolerably long but for the visit which the notary's pretty granddaughter contrived to pay every morning in the cheerless *mezzà*. She commonly appeared on some errand from her mother, but her chief business seemed to be to share with Tonelli the modest feast of rumor and hearsay which he loved to furnish forth for her, and from which doubtless she carried back some fragments of gossip to the family apartments. Tonelli called her, with that mingled archness and tenderness of the Venetians, his *Paronsina*; and, as he had seen her grow up from the smallest possible of Little Mistresses, there was no shyness between them, and they were fully privileged to each other's society by her mother. When she flitted away again, Tonelli was left to a stillness broken only by the soft breathing of the old man in the next room, and by the shrill discourse of his own loquacious pen, so that he was commonly glad enough when it came five o'clock. At this hour he put on his black coat, that shone with constant use, and his faithful silk hat, worn down to the pasteboard with assiduous brushing, and caught up a very jaunty cane in his hand. Then, saluting the notary, he took his way to the little restaurant, where it was his custom to dine, and had his tripe soup and his *risotto*, or dish of fried liver, in the austere silence imposed by the

presence of a few poor Austrian captains and lieutenants.¹ It was not that the Italians feared to be overheard by these enemies ; but it was good *dimostrazione* to be silent before the oppressor, and not let him know that they even enjoyed their dinners well enough, under his government, to chat sociably over them. To tell the truth, this duty was an irksome one to Tonelli, who liked far better to dine, as he sometimes did, at a cook-shop, where he met the folk of the people (*gente del popolo*), as he called them ; and where, though himself a person of civil condition, he discoursed freely with the other guests, and ate of their humble but relishing fare. He was known among them as Sior Tommaso ; and they paid him a homage, which they enjoyed equally with him, as a person not only learned in the law, but a poet of gift enough to write wedding and funeral verses, and a veteran who had fought for the dead Republic of Forty-eight. They honored him as a most travelled gentleman, who had been in the Tyrol, and who could have spoken German, if he had not despised that tongue as the language of the ugly Croats, like one born to it. Who, for example, spoke Venetian more elegantly than Sior Tommaso ? or Tuscan, when he chose ? and yet he was poor, — a man of that genius ! Patience ! When Garibaldi came, we should see ! The *facchini*² and gondoliers, who had been wagging their tongues all day at the church corners and ferries, were never tired of talking of this gifted friend of theirs, when, having ended some impressive discourse or some dramatic story, he left them with a

¹ The sketch thus dates from the time when Venice was still in the hands of the Austrians. Mr. Howells's consulate was in the same period.

² The porters and men of all work in an Italian city.

sudden adieu, and walked quickly away toward the Riva degli Schiavoni.

Here, whether he had dined at the cook-shop, or at his more genteel and gloomy restaurant of the Bronze Horses, it was his custom to lounge an hour or two over a cup of coffee and a Virginia cigar at one of the many *caffès*, and to watch all the world as it passed to and fro on the quay. Tonelli was gray, he did not disown it; but he always maintained that his heart was still young, and that there was, moreover, a great difference in persons as to age, which told in his favor. So he loved to sit there, and look at the ladies; and he amused himself by inventing a pet name for every face he saw, which he used to teach to certain friends of his when they joined him over his coffee. These friends were all young enough to be his sons, and wise enough to be his fathers; but they were always glad to be with him, for he had so cheery a wit and so good a heart that neither his years nor his follies could make any one sad. His kind face beamed with smiles when Pennellini, chief among the youngsters in his affections, appeared on the top of the nearest bridge, and thence descended directly towards his little table. Then it was that he drew out the straw which ran through the centre of his long Virginia, and lighted the pleasant weed, and gave himself up to the delight of making aloud those comments on the ladies which he had hitherto stifled in his breast. Sometimes he would feign himself too deeply taken with a passing beauty to remain quiet, and would make his friend follow with him in chase of her to the Public Gardens. But he was a fickle lover, and wanted presently to get back to his *caffè*, where at decent intervals of days or weeks he would indulge himself in discovering a spy in some

harmless stranger, who, in going out, looked curiously at the scar Tonelli's cheek had brought from the battle of Vicenza in 1848.

"Something of a spy, no?" he asked at these times of the waiter, who, flattered by the penetration of a frequenter of his caffè, and the implication that it was thought seditious enough to be watched by the police, assumed a pensive importance, and answered, "Something of a spy, certainly."

Upon this Tonelli was commonly encouraged to proceed: "Did I ever tell you how I once sent one of those ugly muzzles out of a caffè? I knew him as soon as I saw him, — I am never mistaken in a spy, — and I went with my newspaper, and sat down close at his side. Then I whispered to him across the sheet, 'We are two.' 'Eh?' says he. 'It is a very small caffè, and there is no need of more than one,' and then I stared at him and frowned. He looks at me fixedly a moment, then gathers up his hat and gloves, and takes his pestilency off."

The waiter, who had heard this story, man and boy, a hundred times, made a quite successful show of enjoying it, as he walked away with Tonelli's fee of half a cent in his pocket. Tonelli then had left from his day's salary enough to pay for the ice which he ate at ten o'clock, but which he would sometimes forego, in order to give the money in charity, though more commonly he indulged himself, and put off the beggar with, "Another time, my dear. I have no leisure now to discuss those matters with thee."

On holidays this routine of Tonelli's life was varied. In the forenoon he went to mass at St. Mark's, to see the beauty and fashion of the city; and then he took a walk with his four or five young friends, or went

with them to play at bowls, or even made an excursion to the mainland, where they hired a carriage, and all those Venetians got into it, like so many seamen, and drove the horse with as little mercy as if he had been a sail-boat. At seven o'clock Tonelli dined with the notary, next whom he sat at table, and for whom his quaint pleasantries had a zest that inspired the Paronsina and her mother to shout them into his dull ears, that he might lose none of them. He laughed a kind of faded laugh at them, and, rubbing his pale hands together, showed by his act that he did not think his best wine too good for his kindly guest. The signora feigned to take the same delight shown by her father and daughter in Tonelli's drolleries; but I doubt if she had a great sense of his humor, or, indeed, cared anything for it save as she perceived that it gave pleasure to those she loved. Otherwise, however, she had a sincere regard for him, for he was most useful and devoted to her in her quality of widowed mother; and if she could not feel wit, she could feel gratitude, which is perhaps the rarer gift, if not the more respectable.

The Little Mistress was dependent upon him for nearly all the pleasures and for the only excitements of her life. As a young girl she was at best a sort of caged bird, who had to be guarded against the youth of the other sex as if they, on their part, were so many marauding and ravening cats. During most days of the year the Paronsina's parrot had almost as much freedom as she. He could leave his gilded prison when he chose, and promenade the notary's house as far down as the marble well in the sunless court, and the Paronsina could do little more. The signora would as soon have thought of letting the

parrot walk across their campo alone as her daughter, though the local dangers, either to bird or beauty, could not have been very great. The green-grocer of that sequestered campo was an old woman, the apothecary was gray, and his shop was haunted by none but superannuated physicians; the baker, the butcher, the waiters at the caffè were all professionally, and, as purveyors to her family, out of the question; the sacristan, who sometimes appeared at the perruquier's to get a coal from under the curlingtongs to kindle his censer, had but one eye, which he kept single to the service of the Church, and his perquisite of candle-drippings; and I hazard little in saying that the Paronsina might have danced a polka around Campo San Giuseppe without jeopardy so far as concerned the handsome wood-carver, for his wife always sat in the shop beside him. Nevertheless, a custom is not idly handed down by mother to daughter from the dawn of Christianity to the middle of the nineteenth century; and I cannot deny that the local perruquier, though stricken in years, was still so far kept fresh by the immortal youth of the wax heads in his window as to have something beauish about him; or that, just at the moment the Paronsina chanced to go into the campo alone, a *leone* from Florian's might not have been passing through it, when he would certainly have looked boldly at her, perhaps spoken to her, and possibly pounced at once upon her fluttering heart. So by day the Paronsina rarely went out, and she never emerged unattended from the silence and shadow of her grandfather's house.

If I were here telling a story of the Paronsina, or indeed any story at all, I might suffer myself to enlarge somewhat upon the daily order of her secluded

life, and show how the seclusion of other Venetian girls was the widest liberty as compared with hers ; but I have no right to play with the reader's patience in a performance that can promise no excitement of incident, no charm of invention. Let him figure to himself, if he will, the ancient and half-ruined palace in which the notary dwelt, with a gallery running along one side of its inner court, the slender pillars supporting upon the corroded sculpture of their capitals a clinging vine, that dappled the floor with palpitant light and shadow in the afternoon sun. The gate, whose exquisite Saracenic arch grew into a carven flame, was surmounted by the armorial bearings of a family that died of its sins against the Serenest Republic long ago ; the marble cistern which stood in the middle of the court had still a ducal rose upon either of its four sides ; and little lions of stone perched upon the posts at the head of the marble stairway climbing to the gallery, their fierce aspects worn smooth and amiable by the contact of hands that for many ages had mouldered in tombs. Toward the canal the palace windows had been immemorially bricked up for some reason or caprice, and no morning sunlight, save such as shone from the bright eyes of the Parousina, ever looked into the dim halls. It was a fit abode for such a man as the notary, exiled in the heart of his native city, and it was not unfriendly in its influences to a quiet vegetation like the signora's ; but to the Paronsina it was sad as Venice itself, where, in some moods, I have wondered that any sort of youth could have the courage to exist. Nevertheless, the Paronsina had contrived to grow up here a child of the gayest and archest spirit, and to lead a life of due content, till after her return home

from the comparative freedom and society of Madame Prateux's school, where she spent three years in learning all polite accomplishments, and whence she came, with brilliant hopes and romances ready imagined, for any possible exigency of the future. She adored all the modern Italian poets, and read their verse with that stately and rhythmical fulness of voice which often made it sublime and always pleasing. She was a relentless patriot, an Italianissima of the vividest green, white, and red: and she could interpret the historical novels of her countrymen in their subtlest application to the modern enemies of Italy. But all the Paronsina's gifts and accomplishments were to poor purpose, if they brought no young men a-wooing under her balcony; and it was to no effect that her fervid fancy peopled the palace's empty halls with stately and gallant company out of Marco Visconti, Nicolò de' Lapi, Margherita Pusterla, and the other romances, since she could not hope to receive any practicable offer of marriage from the heroes thus assembled. Her grandfather invited no guests of more substantial presence to his house. In fact, the police watched him too narrowly to permit him to receive society, even had he been so minded, and for kindred reasons his family paid few visits in the city. To leave Venice, except for the autumnal *villeggiatura*,¹ was almost out of the question; repeated applications at the Luogotenenza² won the two ladies but a tardy and scanty grace; and the use of the passport allowing them to spend a few weeks in Florence was attended with so much vexation, in coming and going upon the imperial confines, and when they returned

¹ Excursion into the country.

² Lieutenantcy, or office of the local magistrate.

home they were subject to so great fear of perquisition from the police, that it was after all rather a mortification than a pleasure that the government had given them. The signora received her few acquaintances once a week; but the Paronsina found the old ladies tedious over their cups of coffee or tumblers of lemonade, and declared that her mamma's reception days were a martyrdom, — actually a martyrdom, to her. She was full of life and the beautiful and tender longing of youth; she had a warm heart and a sprightly wit; but she led an existence scarce livelier than a ghost's, and she was so poor in friends and resources that she shuddered to think what must become of her if Tonelli should die. It was not possible, thanks to God! that he should marry.

The signora herself seldom cared to go out, for the reason that it was too cold in winter and too hot in summer. In the one season she clung all day to her wadded armchair, with her *scaldino*¹ in her lap; and in the other season she found it a sufficient diversion to sit in the great hall of the palace, and be fanned by the salt breeze that came from the Adriatic through the vine-garlanded gallery. But besides this habitual inclemency of the weather, which forbade out-door exercise nearly the whole year, it was a displeasure to walk in Venice on account of the stairways of the bridges; and the signora much preferred to wait till they went to the country in the autumn, when she always rode to take the air. The exceptions to her custom were formed by those after-dinner promenades which she sometimes made on holidays, in summer. Then she put on her richest black, and the Paronsina

¹ The covered pan of hot coals which serves as a portable stove in Italian houses and other buildings.

dressed herself in her best, and they both went to walk on the Molo,¹ before the pillars of the lion and the saint, under the escort of Tonelli.

It often happened that, at the hour of their arrival on the Molo, the moon was coming up over the low bank of the Lido² in the east, and all that prospect of ship-bordered quay, island, and lagoon, which, at its worst, is everything that heart can wish, was then at its best, and far beyond words to paint. On the right stretched the long Giudecca,³ with the domes and towers of its Palladian church, and the swelling foliage of its gardens, and its line of warehouses — painted pink, as if even Business, grateful to be tolerated amid such lovely scenes, had striven to adorn herself. In front lay San Giorgio, picturesque with its church and pathetic with its political prisons; and, farther away to the east again, the gloomy mass of the madhouse at San Servolo, and then the slender campanili of the Armenian convent rose over the gleaming and tremulous water. Tonelli took in the beauty of the scene with no more consciousness than a bird; but the Parsonsina had learnt from her romantic poets and novelists to be complimentary to prospects, and her heart gurgled out in rapturous praises of this. The unwonted freedom exhilarated her; there was intoxication in the encounter of faces on the promenade, in the dazzle and glimmer of the lights, and even in the music of the Austrian band playing in the Piazza, as it came purified to her patriotic ear by the distance. There were none but Ital-

¹ The long sea wall.

² A long spit of sand upon which the open sea breaks.

³ A crescent shaped island extending pretty much the whole length of Venice from which it is separated by a broad "canal."

ians upon the Molo, and one might walk there without so much as touching an officer with the hem of one's garment; and, a little later, when the band ceased playing, she should go with the other Italians and possess the Piazza for one blessed hour. In the mean time, the Paronsina had a sharp little tongue; and, after she had flattered the landscape, and had, from her true heart, once for all, saluted the promenaders as brothers and sisters in Italy, she did not mind making fun of their peculiarities of dress and person. She was signally sarcastic upon such ladies as Tonelli chanced to admire, and often so stung him with her jests that he was glad when Pennellini appeared, as he always did exactly at nine o'clock, and joined the ladies in their promenade, asking and answering all those questions of ceremony which form Venetian greeting. He was a youth of the most methodical exactness in his whole life, and could no more have arrived on the Molo a moment before or after nine than the bronze giants on the clock-tower could have hastened or lingered in striking the hour. Nature, which had made him thus punctual and precise, gave him also good looks, and a most amiable kindness of heart. The Paronsina cared nothing at all for him in his quality of handsome young fellow; but she prized him as an acquaintance whom she might salute, and be saluted by, in a city where her grandfather's isolation kept her strange to nearly all the faces she saw. Sometimes her evenings on the Molo wasted away without the exchange of a word save with Tonelli, for her mother seldom talked; and then it was quite possible her teasing was greater than his patience, and that he grew taciturn under her tongue. At such times she hailed Pennellini's appear-

ance with a double delight; for, if he never joined in her attacks upon Tonelli's favorites, he always enjoyed them, and politely applauded them. If his friend reproached him for this treason, he made him every amend in answering, "She is jealous, Tonelli," — a wily compliment, which had the most intense effect in coming from lips ordinarily so sincere as his.

The signora was weary of the promenade long before the Austrian music ceased in the Piazza, and was very glad when it came time for them to leave the Molo, and go and sit down to an ice at the Caffè Florian. This was the supreme hour to the Paron-sina, the one heavenly excess of her restrained and eventless life. All about her were scattered tranquil Italian idlers, listening to the music of the strolling minstrels who had succeeded the military band; on either hand sat her friends, and she had thus the image of that tender devotion without which a young girl is said not to be perfectly happy; while the very heart of adventure seemed to bound in her exchange of glances with a handsome foreigner at a neighboring table. On the other side of the Piazza a few officers still lingered at the Caffè Quadri; and at the Specchi sundry groups of citizens in their dark dress contrasted well with these white uniforms; but, for the most part, the moon and gas-jets shone upon the broad, empty space of the Piazza, whose loneliness the presence of a few belated promenaders only served to render conspicuous. As the giants hammered eleven upon the great bell,¹ the Austrian sentinel, under the Ducal Palace,

¹ Upon one side of the Piazza San Marco is a tower with a great clock, by the side of which stand two bronze figures that hammer the hours upon bells.

uttered a long, reverberating cry; and soon after a patrol of soldiers clanked across the Piazza, and passed with echoing feet through the arcade into the narrow and devious streets beyond. The young girl found it hard to rend herself from the dreamy pleasure of the scene, or even to turn from the fine impersonal pain which the presence of the Austrians in the spectacle inflicted. All gave an impression something like that of the theatre, with the advantage that here one's self was part of the pantomime; and in those days, when nearly everything but the puppet-shows was forbidden to patriots, it was altogether the greatest enjoyment possible to the Paronsina. The pensive charm of the place imbued all the little company so deeply that they scarcely broke it, as they loitered slowly homeward through the deserted Merceria. When they reached the Campo San Salvatore, on many a lovely summer's midnight, their footsteps seemed to waken a nightingale whose cage hung from a lofty balcony there; for suddenly, at their coming, the bird broke into a wild and thrilling song, that touched them all, and suffused the tender heart of the Paronsina with an inexpressible pathos.

Alas! she had so often returned thus from the Piazza, and no stealthy footstep had followed hers homeward with love's persistence and diffidence! She was young, she knew, and she thought not quite dull or hideous; but her spirit was as sole in that melancholy city as if there were no youth but hers in the world. And a little later than this, when she had her first affair, it did not originate in the Piazza, nor at all respond to her expectations in a love-affair. In fact, it was altogether a business affair, and was managed chiefly by Tonelli, who having met a young doctor,

laurelled the year before at Padua,¹ had heard him express so pungent a curiosity to know what the Paronsina would have to her dower, that he perceived he must be madly in love with her. So with the consent of the signora, he had arranged a correspondence between the young people ; and all went on well at first, — the letters from both passing through his hands. But his office was anything but a sinecure, for while the Doctor was on his part of a cold temperament, and disposed to regard the affair merely as a proper way of providing for the natural affections, the Paronsina cared nothing for him personally, and only viewed him favorably as abstract matrimony, — as the means of escaping from the bondage of her girlhood and the sad seclusion of her life into the world outside her grandfather's house. So presently the correspondence fell almost wholly upon Tonelli, who worked up to the point of betrothal with an expense of finesse and sentiment that would have made his fortune in diplomacy or poetry. What should he say now ? that stupid young Doctor would cry in desperation, when Tonelli delicately reminded him that it was time to answer the Paronsina's last note. Say this, that, and the other, Tonelli would answer, giving him the heads of a proper letter, which the Doctor took down on square bits of paper, neatly fashioned for writing prescriptions. "And for God's sake, caro dottore, put a little warmth into it !" The poor Doctor would try, but it must always end in Tonelli's suggesting and almost dictating every sentence ; and then the letter, being carried to the Paronsina, made her laugh : "This is very pretty, my poor Tonelli, but it was never my onoratissimo dottore who thought of these tender compliments.

¹ That is, he had taken his degree at the University there.

Ah! that allusion to my mouth and eyes could only have come from the heart of a great poet. It is yours, Tonelli, don't deny it." And Tonelli, taken in his weak point of literature, could make but a feeble pretence of disclaiming the child of his fancy, while the Paronsina, being in this reckless humor, more than once responded to the Doctor in such fashion that in the end the inspiration of her altered and amended letter was Tonelli's. Even after the betrothal, the love-making languished, and the Doctor was indecently patient of the late day fixed for the marriage by the notary. In fact, the Doctor was very busy; and, as his practice grew, the dower of the Paronsina dwindled in his fancy, till one day he treated the whole question of their marriage with such coldness and uncertainty in his talk with Tonelli, that the latter saw whither his thoughts were drifting, and went home with an indignant heart to the Paronsina, who joyfully sat down and wrote her first sincere letter to the Doctor, dismissing him.

"It is finished," she said, "and I am glad. After all, perhaps, I don't want to be any freer than I am; and while I have you, Tonelli, I don't want a younger lover. Younger? Diana! You are in the flower of youth, and I believe you will never wither. Did that rogue of a Doctor, then, really give you the elixir of youth for writing him those letters? Tell me, Tonelli, as a true friend, how long have you been forty-seven? Ever since your fiftieth birthday? Listen! I have been more afraid of losing you than my sweetest Doctor. I thought you would be so much in love with lovmaking that you would go breakneck and court some one in earnest on your own account!"

Thus the Paronsina made a jest of the loss she had

sustained ; but it was not pleasant to her, except as it dissolved a tie which love had done nothing to form. Her life seemed colder and vaguer after it, and the hour very far away when the handsome officers of her king (all good Venetians in those days called Victor Emmanuel "our king") should come to drive out the Austrians, and marry their victims. She scarcely enjoyed the prodigious privilege, offered her at this time in consideration of her bereavement, of going to the comedy, under Tonelli's protection and along with Pennellini and his sister, while the poor signora afterwards had real qualms of patriotism concerning the breach of public duty involved in this distraction of her daughter. She hoped that no one had recognized her at the theatre, otherwise they might have a warning from the Venetian Committee. "Thou knowest," she said to the Paronsina, "that they have even admonished the old Conte Tradonico, who loves the comedy better than his soul, and who used to go every evening. Thy aunt told me, and that the old rogue, when people ask him why he does n't go to the play, answers, 'My mistress won't let me.' But fie! I am saying what young girls ought not to hear."

After the affair with the Doctor, I say, life refused to return exactly to its old expression, and I suppose that, if what presently happened was ever to happen, it could not have occurred at a more appropriate time for a disaster, or at a time when its victims were less able to bear it. I do not know whether I have yet sufficiently indicated the fact, but the truth is, both the Paronsina and her mother had from long use come to regard Tonelli as a kind of property of theirs, which had no right in any way to alienate itself. They would have felt an attempt of this sort to be not only very

absurd, but very wicked, in view of their affection for him and dependence upon him; and while the Paron-sina thanked God that he would never marry, she had a deep conviction that he ought not to marry, even if he desired. It was at the same time perfectly natural, nay, filial, that she should herself be ready to desert this old friend, whom she felt so strictly bound to be faithful to her loneliness. As matters fell out, she had herself primarily to blame for Tonelli's loss; for, in that interval of disgust and ennui following the Doctor's dismissal, she had suffered him to seek his own pleasure on holiday evenings; and he had thus wandered alone to the Piazza, and so, one night, had seen a lady eating an ice there, and fallen in love without more ado than another man should drink a lemonade.

This facility came of habit, for Tonelli had now been falling in love every other day for some forty years; and in that time had broken the hearts of innumerable women of all nations and classes. The prettiest water-carriers in his neighborhood were in love with him, as their mothers had been before them, and ladies of noble condition were believed to cherish passions for him. Especially, gay and beautiful foreigners, as they sat at Florian's, were taken with hopeless love of him; and he could tell stories of very romantic adventure in which he figured as hero, though nearly always with moral effect. For example, there was the countess from the mainland, — she merited the sad distinction of being chief among those who had vainly loved him, if you could believe the poet who both inspired and sang her passion. When she took a palace in Venice, he had been summoned to her on the pretended business of a secretary; but when she presented herself with those idle accounts

of her factor and tenants on the mainland, her household expenses and her correspondence with her advocate, Tonelli perceived at once that it was upon a wholly different affair that she had desired to see him. She was a rich widow of forty, of a beauty supernaturally preserved and very great. "This is no place for thee, Tonelli mine," the secretary had said to himself, after a week had passed, and he had understood all the waywardness of that unhappy lady's intentions. "Thou art not too old, but thou art too wise, for these follies, though no saint;" and so had gathered up his personal effects, and secretly quitted the palace. But such was the countess's fury at his escape that she never paid him his week's salary; nor did she manifest the least gratitude that Tonelli, out of regard for her son, a very honest young man, refused in any way to identify her, but, to all except his closest friends, pretended that he had passed those terrible eight days on a visit to the country village where he was born. It showed Pennellini's ignorance of life that he should laugh at this history; and I prefer to treat it seriously, and to use it in explaining the precipitation with which Tonelli's latest inamorata returned his love.

Though, indeed, why should a lady of thirty, and from an obscure country town, hesitate to be enamored of any eligible suitor who presented himself in Venice? It is not my duty to enter upon a detail or summary of Carlotta's character or condition, or to do more than indicate that, while she did not greatly excel in youth, good looks, or worldly gear, she had yet a little property, and was of that soft prettiness which is often more effective than downright beauty. There was, indeed, something very charming about her:

and, if she was a blonde, I have no reason to think she was as fickle as the Venetian proverb paints that complexion of woman; or that she had not every quality which would have excused any one but Tonelli for thinking of marrying her.

After their first mute interview in the Piazza, the two lost no time in making each other's acquaintance; but though the affair was vigorously conducted, no one could say that it was not perfectly in order. Tonelli on the following day, which chanced to be Sunday, repaired to St. Mark's at the hour of the fashionable mass, where he gazed steadfastly at the lady during her orisons, and whence, at a discreet distance, he followed her home to the house of the friends whom she was visiting. Somewhat to his discomfiture at first, these proved to be old acquaintances of his; and when he came at night to walk up and down under their balconies, as bound in true love to do, they made nothing of asking him in-doors, and presenting him to his lady. But the pair were not to be entirely balked of their romance, and they still arranged stolen interviews at church, where one furtively whispered word had the value of whole hours of unrestricted converse under the roof of their friends. They quite refused to take advantage of their anomalously easy relations, beyond inquiry on his part as to the amount of the lady's dower, and on hers as to the permanence of Tonelli's employment. He in due form had Pennellini to his confidant, and Carlotta unbosomed herself to her hostess; and the affair was thus conducted with such secrecy that not more than two thirds of Tonelli's acquaintance knew anything about it when their engagement was announced.

There were now no circumstances to prevent their early union, yet the happy conclusion was one to which Tonelli urged himself after many secret and bitter displeasures of spirit. I am persuaded that his love for Carlotta must have been most ardent and sincere, for there was everything in his history and reason against marriage. He could not disown that he had hitherto led a joyous and careless life, or that he was exactly fitted for the modest delights, the discreet variety, of his present state, — for his daily routine at the notary's, his dinner at the Bronze Horses or the cook-shop, his hour at the caffè, his walks and excursions, for his holiday banquet with the Cenarotti, and his formal promenade with the ladies of that family upon the Molo. He had a good employment, with a salary that held him above want, and afforded him the small luxuries already named; and he had fixed habits of work and of relaxation, which made both a blessing. He had his chosen circle of intimate equals, who regarded him for his good-heartedness and wit and foibles; and his little following of humble admirers, who looked upon him as a gifted man in disgrace with fortune. His friendships were as old as they were secure and cordial; he was established in the kindness of all who knew him; and he was flattered by the dependence of the Paronsina and her mother, even when it was troublesome to him. He had his past of sentiment and war, his present of story-telling and romance. He was quite independent: his sins, if he had any, began and ended in himself, for none was united to him so closely as to be hurt by them; and he was far too imprudent a man to be taken for an example by any one. He came and went as he listed, he did this or that without question. With no heart chosen yet from the

world of woman's love, he was still a young man, with hopes and affections as pliable as a boy's. He had, in a word, that reputation of good-fellow which in Venice gives a man the title of *buon diavolo*, but on which he does not anywhere turn his back with impunity, either from his own consciousness or from public opinion. There never was such a thing in the world as both good devil and good husband ; and even with his betrothal Tonelli felt that his old, careless, merry life of the hour ended, and that he had tacitly recognized a future while he was yet unable to cut the past. If one has for twenty years made a jest of women, however amiably and insincerely, one does not propose to marry a woman without making a jest of one's self. The avenging remembrance of elderly people whose late matrimony had furnished food for Tonelli's wit now rose up to torment him, and in his morbid fancy the merriment he had caused was echoed back in his own derision.

It shocked him to find how quickly his secret took wing, and it annoyed him that all his acquaintances were so prompt to felicitate him. He imagined a latent mockery in their speeches, and he took them with an argumentative solemnity. He reasoned separately with his friends ; to all who spoke to him of his marriage he presented elaborate proofs that it was the wisest thing he could possibly do, and tried to give the affair a cold air of prudence. " You see, I am getting old ; that is to say, I am tired of this bachelor life in which I have no one to take care of me, if I fall sick, and to watch that the doctors do not put me to death. My pay is very little, but with Carlotta's dower well invested, we shall both together live better than either of us lives alone. She is a careful woman, and will

keep me neat and comfortable. She is not so young as some women I had thought to marry, — no, but so much the better ; nobody will think her half so charming as I do, and at my time of life that is a great point gained. She is good, and has an admirable disposition. She is not spoiled by Venice, but as innocent as a dove. Oh, I shall find myself very well with her!”

This was the speech which with slight modification Tonelli made over and over again to all his friends but Pennellini. To him he unmasked, and said boldly that at last he was really in love ; and being gently discouraged in what seemed his folly, and incredulously laughed at, he grew angry, and gave such proofs of his sincerity that Pennellini was convinced, and owned to himself, “This madman is actually enamored, — enamored like a cat ! Patience ! What will ever those Cengarotti say ?”

In a little while poor Tonelli lost the philosophic mind with which he had at first received the congratulations of his friends, and from reasoning with them, fell to resenting their good wishes. Very little things irritated him, and pleasantries which he had taken in excellent part, time out of mind, now raised his anger. His barber had for many years been in the habit of saying, as he applied the stick of fixature to Tonelli’s mustache, and gave it a jaunty upward curl, “Now we will bestow that little dash of youthfulness ;” and it both amazed and hurt him to have Tonelli respond with a fierce “Tsit !” and say that this jest was proper in its antiquity to the times of Romulus rather than our own period, and so go out of the shop without that “Adieu, old fellow,” which he had never failed to give in twenty years. “Capperi !” said the barber, when he emerged from a profound reverie into which

this outbreak had plunged him, and in which he had remained holding the nose of his next customer, and tweaking it to and fro in the violence of his emotions, regardless of those mumbled maledictions which the lather would not permit the victim to articulate. "If Tonelli is so savage in his betrothal, we must wait for his marriage to tame him. I am sorry. He was always such a good devil."

But if many things annoyed Tonelli, there were some that deeply wounded him, and chiefly the fact that his betrothal seemed to have fixed an impassable gulf of years between him and all those young men whose company he loved so well. He had really a boy's heart, and he had consorted with them because he felt himself nearer their age than his own. Hitherto they had in no wise found his presence a restraint. They had always laughed, and told their loves, and spoken their young men's thoughts, and made their young men's jokes, without fear or shame, before the merry-hearted sage, who never offered good advice, if indeed he ever dreamed that there was a wiser philosophy than theirs. It had been as if he were the youngest among them; but now, in spite of all that he or they could do, he seemed suddenly and irretrievably aged. They looked at him strangely, as if for the first time they saw that his mustache was gray, that his brow was not smooth like theirs, that there were crow's-feet at the corners of his kindly eyes. They could not phrase the vague feeling that haunted their hearts, or they would have said that Tonelli, in offering to marry, had voluntarily turned his back upon his youth; that love, which would only have brought a richer bloom to their age, had breathed away forever the autumnal blossom of his.

Something of this made itself felt in Tonelli's own consciousness, whenever he met them, and he soon grew to avoid these comrades of his youth. It was therefore after a purely accidental encounter with one of them, and as he was passing into the Campo Sant' Angelo, head down, and supporting himself with an inexplicable sense of infirmity upon the cane he was wont so jauntily to flourish, that he heard himself addressed with, "I say, master!" He looked up, and beheld the fat madman who patrols that campo, and who has the license of his affliction to utter insolences to whomsoever he will, leaning against the door of a tobacconist's shop, with his arms folded, and a lazy, mischievous smile loitering down on his greasy face. As he caught Tonelli's eye he nodded, "Eh! I have heard, master;" while the idlers of that neighborhood, who relished and repeated his incoherent pleasantries like the *mots* of some great diner-out, gathered near with expectant grins. Had Tonelli been altogether himself, as in other days, he would have been far too wise to answer, "What hast thou heard, poor animal?"

"That you are going to take a mate when most birds think of flying away," said the madman. "Because it has been summer a long time with you, master, you think it will never be winter. Look out: the wolf does n't eat the season."

The poor fool in these words seemed to utter a public voice of disapprobation and derision; and as the pitiless bystanders, who had many a time laughed with Tonelli, now laughed at him, joining in the applause which the madman himself led off, the miserable good devil walked away with a shiver, as if the weather had actually turned cold. It was not till

he found himself in Carlotta's presence that the long summer appeared to return to him. Indeed, in her tenderness and his real love for her he won back all his youth again; and he found it of a truer and sweeter quality than he had known even when his years were few, while the gay old-bachelor life he had long led seemed to him a period of miserable loneliness and decrepitude. Mirrored in her fond eyes, he saw himself alert and handsome; and, since for the time being they were to each other all the world, we may be sure there was nothing in the world then to vex or shame Tonelli. The promises of the future, too, seemed not improbable of fulfilment, for they were not extravagant promises. These people's castle in the air was a house furnished from Carlotta's modest portion, and situated in a quarter of the city not too far from the Piazza, and convenient to a decent caffè, from which they could order a lemonade or a cup of coffee for visitors. Tonelli's stipend was to pay the housekeeping, as well as the minute wage of a servant-girl from the country; and it was believed that they could save enough from that, and a little of Carlotta's money at interest, to go sometimes to the Malibran theatre or the Marionette, or even make an excursion to the mainland upon a holiday; but if they could not, it was certainly better Italianism to stay at home; and at least they could always walk to the Public Gardens. At one time, religious differences threatened to cloud this blissful vision of the future; but it was finally agreed that Carlotta should go to mass and confession as often as she liked, and should not tease Tonelli about his soul; while he, on his part, was not to speak ill of the Pope except as a temporal prince, or of any of

the priesthood except of the Jesuits when in company, in order to show that marriage had not made him a *codino*.¹ For the like reason, no change was to be made in his custom of praising Garibaldi and reviling the accursed Germans upon all safe occasions.

As Tonelli had nothing in the world but his salary and his slender wardrobe, Carlotta eagerly accepted the idea of a loss of family property during the revolution. Of Tonelli's scar she was as proud as Tonelli himself.

When she came to speak of the acquaintance of all those young men, it seemed again like a breath from the north to her betrothed; and he answered, with a sigh, that this was an affair that had already finished itself. "I have long thought them too boyish for me," he said, "and I shall keep none of them but Pennellini, who is even older than I, — who, I believe, was never born, but created middle-aged out of the dust of the earth, like Adam. He is not a good devil, but he has every good quality."

While he thus praised his friend, Tonelli was meditating a service, which, when he asked it of Pennellini, had almost the effect to destroy their ancient amity. This was no less than the composition of those wedding-verses, without which, printed and exposed to view in all the shop-windows, no one in Venice feels himself adequately and truly married. Pennellini had never willingly made a verse in his life; and it was long before he understood Tonelli, when he urged the delicate request. Then in vain he protested, recalcitrated. It was all an offence to Tonelli's morbid soul, already irritated by his friend's obtuseness,

¹ A whimsical bit of badinage, literally, the "little tail of a periwig."

and eager to turn even the reluctance of nature into insult. He took his refusal for a sign that he, too, deserted him ; and must be called back, after bidding Pennellini adieu, to hear the only condition on which the accursed sonnet would be furnished, namely, that it should not be signed Pennellini, but *An Affectionate Friend*. Never was sonnet cost poet so great anguish as this : Pennellini went at it conscientiously, as if it were a problem in mathematics ; he refreshed his prosody, he turned over Carrer, he toiled a whole night, and in due time appeared as Tonelli's affectionate friend in all the butchers' and bakers' windows. But it had been too much to ask of him, and for a while he felt the shock of Tonelli's unreason and excess so much that there was a decided coolness between them.

This important particular arranged, little remained for Tonelli to do but to come to that open understanding with the Paronsina and her mother which he had long dreaded and avoided. He could not conceal from himself that his marriage was a kind of desertion of the two dear friends so dependent upon his singleness, and he considered the case of the Paronsina with a real remorse. If his meditated act sometimes appeared to him a gross inconsistency and a satire upon all his former life, he had still consoled himself with the truth of his passion, and had found love its own apology and comfort ; but in its relation to these lonely women, his love itself had no fairer aspect than that of treason, and he shrank from owning it before them with a sense of guilt. Some wild dreams of reconciling his future with his past occasionally haunted him ; but in his saner moments, he perceived their folly. Carlotta, he knew, was good

and patient, but she was nevertheless a woman, and she would never consent that he should be to the Cenarotti all that he had been; these ladies also were very kind and reasonable, but they too were women, and incapable of accepting a less perfect devotion. Indeed, was not his proposed marriage too much like taking her only son from the signora and giving the Paronsina a stepmother? It was worse, and so the ladies of the notary's family viewed it, cherishing a resentment that grew with Tonelli's delay to deal frankly with them; while Carlotta, on her part, was wounded that these old friends should ignore his future wife so utterly. On both sides evil was stored up.

When Tonelli would still make a show of fidelity to the Paronsina and her mother, they accepted his awkward advances, the latter with a cold visage, the former with a sarcastic face and tongue. He had managed particularly ill with the Paronsina, who, having no romance of her own, would possibly have come to enjoy the autumnal poetry of his love if he had permitted. But when she first approached him on the subject of those rumors she had heard, and treated them with a natural derision, as involving the most absurd and preposterous ideas, he, instead of suffering her jests, and then turning her interest to his favor, resented them, and closed his heart and its secret against her. What could she do, thereafter, but feign to avoid the subject, and adroitly touch it with constant, invisible stings? Alas! it did not need that she should ever speak to Tonelli with the wicked intent she did; at this time he would have taken ill whatever most innocent thing she said. When friends are to be estranged, they do not require a cause. They have but to doubt one another, and

no forced forbearance or kindness between them can do aught but confirm their alienation. This is on the whole fortunate, for in this manner neither feels to blame for the broken friendship, and each can declare with perfect truth that he did all he could to maintain it. Tonelli said to himself, "If the Paronsina had treated the affair properly at first!" and the Paronsina thought, "If he had told me frankly about it to begin with!" Both had a latent heartache over their trouble, and both a sense of loss the more bitter because it was of loss still unacknowledged.

As the day fixed for Tonelli's wedding drew near, the rumor of it came to the Cenarotti from all their acquaintance. But when people spoke to them of it, as of something they must be fully and particularly informed of, the signora answered coldly, "It seems that we have not merited Tonelli's confidence;" and the Paronsina received the gossip with an air of clearly affected surprise, and a "Davvero!"¹ that at least discomfited the tale-bearers.

The consciousness of the unworthy part he was acting toward these ladies had come at last to poison the pleasure of Tonelli's wooing, even in Carlotta's presence; yet I suppose he would still have let his wedding-day come and go, and been married beyond hope of atonement, so loath was he to inflict upon himself and them the pain of an explanation, if one day, within a week of that time, the notary had not bade his clerk dine with him on the morrow. It was a holiday, and as Carlotta was at home, making ready for the marriage, Tonelli consented to take his place at the table from which he had been a long time absent. But it turned out such a frigid and melan-

¹ "Really!"

choly banquet as never was known before. The old notary, to whom all things came dimly, finally missed the accustomed warmth of Tonelli's fun, and said, with a little shiver, "Why, what ails you, Tonelli? You are as moody as a man in love."

The notary had been told several times of Tonelli's affair, but it was his characteristic not to remember any gossip later than that of 'Forty-eight.

The Paronsina burst into a laugh full of the cruelty and insult of a woman's long-smothered sense of injury. "Caro nonno," she screamed into her grandfather's dull ear, "he is really in despair how to support his happiness. He is shy, even of his old friends, — he has had so little experience. It is the first love of a young man. Bisogna compatiire la gioventù, caro nonno."¹ And her tongue being finally loosed, the Paronsina broke into incoherent mockeries, that hurt more from their purpose than their point, and gave no one greater pain than herself.

Tonelli sat sad and perfectly mute under the infliction, but he said in his heart, "I have merited worse."

At first the signora remained quite aghast; but when she collected herself, she called out peremptorily, "Madamigella, you push the affair a little beyond. Cease!"

The Paronsina, having said all she desired, ceased, panting.

The old notary, for whose slow sense all but her first words had been too quick, though all had been spoken at him, said dryly, turning to Tonelli, "I imagine that my deafness is not always a misfortune."

It was by an inexplicable, but hardly less inevitable, violence to the inclinations of each that, after

¹ "You must make allowance for his youth, dear granddaddy."

this miserable dinner, the signora, the Paronsina, and Tonelli should go forth together for their wonted promenade on the Molo. Use, which is the second, is also very often the stronger nature, and so these parted friends made a last show of union and harmony. In nothing had their amity been more fatally broken than in this careful homage to its forms; and now, as they walked up and down in the moonlight, they were of the saddest kind of apparitions, — not mere disembodied spirits, which, however, are bad enough, but disanimated bodies, which are far worse. and of which people are not more afraid only because they go about in society so commonly. As on many and many another night of summers past, the moon came up and stood over the Lido, striking far across the glittering lagoon, and everywhere winning the flattered eye to the dark masses of shadow upon the water; to the trees of the Gardens, to the trees and towers and domes of the cloistered and templed isles. Scene of pensive and incomparable loveliness! giving even to the stranger, in some faint and most unequal fashion, a sense of the awful meaning of exile to the Venetian, who in all other lands in the world is doubly an alien, from their unutterable unlikeness to his sole and beautiful city. The prospect had that pathetic unreality to the friends which natural things always assume to people playing a part, and I imagine that they saw it not more substantial than it appears to the exile in his dreams. In their promenade they met again and again the unknown, wonted faces; they even encountered some acquaintances, whom they greeted, and with whom they chatted for a while; and when at nine the bronze giants beat the hour upon their bell, — with as remote effect as if they were

giants of the times before the flood, — they were aware of Pennellini, promptly appearing like an exact and methodical spectre.

But to-night the Paronsina, who had made the scene no compliments, did not insist as usual upon the ice at Florian's; and Pennellini took his formal leave of the friends under the arch of the Clock Tower, and they walked silently homeward through the echoing Merceria.

At the notary's gate Tonelli would have said good-night, but the signora made him enter with them, and then abruptly left him standing with the Paronsina in the gallery, while she was heard hurrying away to her own apartment. She reappeared, extending toward Tonelli both hands, upon which glittered and glittered manifold skeins of the delicate chain of Venice.

She had a very stately and impressive bearing, as she stood there in the moonlight, and addressed him with a collected voice. "Tonelli," she said, "I think you have treated your oldest and best friends very cruelly. Was it not enough that you should take yourself from us, but you must also forbid our hearts to follow you even in sympathy and good wishes? I had almost thought to say adieu forever to-night; but," she continued, with a breaking utterance, and passing tenderly to the familiar form of address, "I cannot part so with thee. Thou hast been too like a son to me, too like a brother to my poor Clarice. Maybe thou no longer lovest us, yet I think thou wilt not disdain this gift for thy wife. Take it, Tonelli, if not for our sake, perhaps then for the sake of sorrows that in times past we have shared together in this unhappy Venice."

Here the signora ended perforce the speech, which had been long for her, and the Paronsina burst into a passion of weeping, — not more at her mamma's words than out of self-pity and from the national sensibility.

Tonelli took the chain, and reverently kissed it and the hands that gave it. He had a helpless sense of the injustice the signora's words and the Paronsina's tears did him; he knew that they put him with feminine excess further in the wrong than even his own weakness had; but he tried to express nothing of this, — it was but part of the miserable maze in which his life was involved. With what courage he might he owned his error, but protested his faithful friendship, and poured out all his troubles, — his love for Carlotta, his regret for them, his shame and remorse for himself. They forgave him, and there was everything in their words and will to restore their old friendship, and keep it; and when the gate with a loud clang closed upon Tonelli, going from them, they all felt that it had irrevocably perished.

I do not say that there was not always a decent and affectionate bearing on the part of the Paronsina and her mother towards Tonelli and his wife; I acknowledge that it was but too careful and faultless a tenderness, ever conscious of its own fragility. Far more natural was the satisfaction they took in the delayed fruitfulness of Tonelli's marriage, and then in the fact that his child was a girl, and not a boy. It was but human that they should doubt his happiness, and that the signora should always say, when hard pressed with questions upon the matter: "Yes, Tonelli is married; but if it were to do again, I think he would do it to-morrow rather than to-day."

A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

It was long past the twilight hour, which has been already mentioned as so oppressive in suburban places, and it was even too late for visitors, when a resident, whom I shall briefly describe as a contributor to the magazines, was startled by a ring at his door. As any thoughtful person would have done upon the like occasion, he ran over his acquaintance in his mind, speculating whether it were such or such a one, and dismissing the whole list of improbabilities, before he laid down the book he was reading and answered the bell. When at last he did this, he was rewarded by the apparition of an utter stranger on his threshold, — a gaunt figure of forlorn and curious smartness towering far above him, that jerked him a nod of the head, and asked if Mr. Hapford lived there. The face which the lamplight revealed was remarkable for a harsh two days' growth of beard, and a single bloodshot eye; yet it was not otherwise a sinister countenance, and there was something in the strange presence that appealed and touched. The contributor, revolving the facts vaguely in his mind, was not sure, after all, that it was not the man's clothes rather than his expression that softened him toward the rugged visage: they were so tragically cheap, and the misery of helpless needle-women, and the poverty and ignorance of the purchaser, were so apparent in their shabby newness, of which they appeared still conscious enough to have

led the way to the very window, in the Semitic quarter of the city, where they had lain ticketed, "This nobby suit for \$15."

But the stranger's manner put both his face and his clothes out of mind, and claimed a deeper interest when, being answered that the person for whom he asked did not live there, he set his bristling lips hard together, and sighed heavily.

"They told me," he said, in a hopeless way, "that he lived on this street, and I've been to every other house. I'm very anxious to find him, Cap'n," — the contributor, of course, had no claim to the title with which he was thus decorated, — "for I've a daughter living with him, and I want to see her; I've just got home from a two years' voyage, and" — there was a struggle of the Adam's-apple in the man's gaunt throat — "I find she's about all there is left of my family."

How complex is every human motive! This contributor had been lately thinking, whenever he turned the pages of some foolish traveller, — some empty prattler of Southern or Eastern lands, where all sensation was long ago exhausted, and the oxygen has perished from every sentiment, so has it been breathed and breathed again, — that nowadays the wise adventurer sat down beside his own register and waited for incidents to seek him out. It seemed to him that the cultivation of a patient and receptive spirit was the sole condition needed to insure the occurrence of all manner of surprising facts within the range of one's own personal knowledge; that not only the Greeks were at our doors, but the fairies and the genii, and all the people of romance, who had but to be hospitably treated in order to develop the deepest interest of

fiction, and to become the characters of plots so ingenious that the most cunning invention were poor beside them. I myself am not so confident of this, and would rather trust Mr. Charles Reade, say, for my amusement than any chance combination of events. But I should be afraid to say how much his pride in the character of the stranger's sorrows, as proof of the correctness of his theory, prevailed with the contributor to ask him to come in and sit down; though I hope that some abstract impulse of humanity, some compassionate and unselfish care for the man's misfortunes as misfortunes, was not wholly wanting. Indeed, the helpless simplicity with which he had confided his case might have touched a harder heart. "Thank you," said the poor fellow, after a moment's hesitation. "I believe I will come in. I've been on foot all day, and after such a long voyage it makes a man dreadfully sore to walk about so much. Perhaps you can think of a Mr. Hapford living somewhere in the neighborhood."

He sat down, and, after a pondering silence, in which he had remained with his head fallen upon his breast, "My name is Jonathan Tinker," he said, with the unaffected air which had already impressed the contributor, and as if he felt that some form of introduction was necessary, "and the girl that I want to find is Julia Tinker." Then he added, resuming the eventful personal history which the listener exulted, while he regretted, to hear: "You see, I shipped first to Liverpool, and there I heard from my family; and then I shipped again for Hong-Kong, and after that I never heard a word: I seemed to miss the letters everywhere. This morning, at four o'clock, I left my ship as soon as she had hauled into the dock, and hur-

ried up home. The house was shut, and not a soul in it; and I did n't know what to do, and I sat down on the doorstep to wait till the neighbors woke up, to ask them what had become of my family. And the first one come out he told me my wife had been dead a year and a half, and the baby I'd never seen, with her; and one of my boys was dead; and he did n't know where the rest of the children was, but he'd heard two of the little ones was with a family in the city."

The man mentioned these things with the half-apologetic air observable in a certain kind of Americans when some accident obliges them to confess the infirmity of the natural feelings. They do not ask your sympathy, and you offer it quite at your own risk, with a chance of having it thrown back upon your hands. The contributor assumed the risk so far as to say, "Pretty rough!" when the stranger paused; and perhaps these homely words were best suited to reach the homely heart. The man's quivering lips closed hard again, a kind of spasm passed over his dark face, and then two very small drops of brine shone upon his weather-worn cheeks. This demonstration, into which he had been surprised, seemed to stand for the passion of tears into which the emotional races fall at such times. He opened his lips with a kind of dry click, and went on:—

"I hunted about the whole forenoon in the city, and at last I found the children. I'd been gone so long they did n't know me, and somehow I thought the people they were with were n't over-glad I'd turned up. Finally the oldest child told me that Julia was living with a Mr. Hapford on this street, and I started out here to-night to look her up. If I can find

her, I'm all right. I can get the family together, then, and start new."

"It seems rather odd," mused the listener aloud, "that the neighbors let them break up so, and that they should all scatter as they did."

"Well, it ain't so curious as it seems, Cap'n. There was money for them at the owners', all the time; I'd left part of my wages when I sailed; but they didn't know how to get at it, and what could a parcel of children do? Julia's a good girl, and when I find her I'm all right."

The writer could only repeat that there was no Mr. Hapford living on that street, and never had been, so far as he knew. Yet there might be such a person in the neighborhood: and they would go out together and ask at some of the houses about. But the stranger must first take a glass of wine; for he looked used up.

The sailor awkwardly but civilly enough protested that he did not want to give so much trouble, but took the glass, and, as he put it to his lips, said formally, as if it were a toast or a kind of grace, "I hope I may have the opportunity of returning the compliment." The contributor thanked him; though, as he thought of all the circumstances of the case, and considered the cost at which the stranger had come to enjoy his politeness, he felt little eagerness to secure the return of the compliment at the same price, and added, with the consequence of another set phrase, "Not at all." But the thought had made him the more anxious to befriend the luckless soul fortune had cast in his way; and so the two sallied out together, and rang doorbells wherever lights were still seen burning in the windows, and asked the astonished people who answered their

summons whether any Mr. Hapford were known to live in the neighborhood.

And although the search for this gentleman proved vain, the contributor could not feel that an expedition which set familiar objects in such novel lights was altogether a failure. He entered so intimately into the cares and anxieties of his protégé that at times he felt himself in some inexplicable sort a shipmate of Jonathan Tinker, and almost personally a partner of his calamities. The estrangement of all things which takes place, within doors and without, about midnight may have helped to cast this doubt upon his identity; — he seemed to be visiting now for the first time the streets and neighborhoods nearest his own, and his feet stumbled over the accustomed walks. In his quality of houseless wanderer, and — so far as appeared to others — possibly worthless vagabond, he also got a new and instructive effect upon the faces which, in his real character, he knew so well by their looks of neighborly greeting; and it is his belief that the first hospitable prompting of the human heart is to shut the door in the eyes of homeless strangers who present themselves after eleven o'clock. By that time the servants are all abed, and the gentleman of the house answers the bell, and looks out with a loath and bewildered face, which gradually changes to one of suspicion, and of wonder as to what those fellows can possibly want of *him*, till at last the prevailing expression is one of contrite desire to atone for the first reluctance by any sort of service. The contributor professes to have observed these changing phases in the visages of those whom he that night called from their dreams, or arrested in the act of going to bed; and he drew the conclusion — very proper for his imaginable

connection with the garroting and other adventurous brotherhoods — that the most flattering moment for knocking on the head people who answer a late ring at night is either in their first selfish bewilderment, or their final self-abandonment to their better impulses. It does not seem to have occurred to him that he would himself have been a much more favorable subject for the predatory arts than any of his neighbors, if his shipmate, the unknown companion of his researches for Mr. Hapford, had been at all so minded. But the faith of the gaunt giant upon which he reposed was good, and the contributor continued to wander about with him in perfect safety. Not a soul among those they asked had ever heard of a Mr. Hapford, — far less of a Julia Tinker living with him. But they all listened to the contributor's explanation with interest and eventual sympathy; and in truth, — briefly told, with a word now and then thrown in by Jonathan Tinker, who kept at the bottom of the steps, showing like a gloomy spectre in the night, or, in his grotesque length and gauntness, like the other's shadow cast there by the lamplight, — it was a story which could hardly fail to awaken pity.

At last, after ringing several bells where there were no lights, in the mere wantonness of good-will, and going away before they could be answered (it would be entertaining to know what dreams they caused the sleepers within), there seemed to be nothing for it but to give up the search till morning, and go to the main street and wait for the last horse-car to the city.

There, seated upon the curbstone, Jonathan Tinker, being plied with a few leading questions, told in hints and scraps the story of his hard life, which was at present that of a second mate, and had been that of

a cabin-boy and of a seaman before the mast. The second mate's place he held to be the hardest aboard ship. You got only a few dollars more than the men, and you did not rank with the officers; you took your meals alone, and in everything you belonged by yourself. The men did not respect you, and sometimes the captain abused you awfully before the passengers. The hardest captain that Jonathan Tinker ever sailed with was Captain Gooding of the Cape. It had got to be so that no man would ship second mate under Captain Gooding; and Jonathan Tinker was with him only one voyage. When he had been home awhile, he saw an advertisement for a second mate, and he went round to the owners'. They had kept it secret who the captain was; but there was Captain Gooding in the owners' office. "Why, here's the man, now, that I want for a second mate," said he, when Jonathan Tinker entered; "he knows me." — "Captain Gooding, I know you 'most too well to want to sail under you," answered Jonathan. "I might go if I had n't been with you one voyage too many already."

"And then the men!" said Jonathan, "the men coming aboard drunk, and having to be pounded sober! And the hardest of the fight falls on the second mate! Why, there is n't an inch of me that has n't been cut over or smashed into a jelly. I've had three ribs broken; I've got a scar from a knife on my cheek; and I've been stabbed bad enough, half a dozen times, to lay me up."

Here he gave a sort of desperate laugh, as if the notion of so much misery and such various mutilation were too grotesque not to be amusing. "Well, what can you do?" he went on. "If you don't strike, the men think you're afraid of them; and so you have to

begin hard and go on hard. I always tell a man, 'Now, my man, I always begin with a man the way I mean to keep on. You do your duty and you're all right. But if you don't' — Well, the men ain't Americans any more, — Dutch, Spaniards, Chinese, Portuguee, — and it ain't like abusing a white man."

Jonathan Tinker was plainly part of the horrible tyranny which we all know exists on shipboard; and his listener respected him the more that, though he had heart enough to be ashamed of it, he was too honest not to own it.

Why did he still follow the sea? Because he did not know what else to do. When he was younger, he used to love it, but now he hated it. Yet there was not a prettier life in the world if you got to be captain. He used to hope for that once, but not now; though he *thought* he could navigate a ship. Only let him get his family together again, and he would — yes, he would — try to do something ashore.

No car had yet come in sight, and so the contributor suggested that they should walk to the car-office, and look in the "Directory," which is kept there, for the name of Hapford, in search of whom it had already been arranged that they should renew their acquaintance on the morrow. Jonathan Tinker, when they had reached the office, heard with constitutional phlegm that the name of the Hapford for whom he inquired was not in the "Directory." "Never mind," said the other; "come round to my house in the morning. We'll find him yet." So they parted with a shake of the hand, the second mate saying that he believed he should go down to the vessel and sleep aboard, — if he could sleep, — and murmuring at the last moment the hope of returning the compliment,

while the other walked homeward, weary as to the flesh, but, in spite of his sympathy for Jonathan Tinker, very elate in spirit. The truth is, — and however disgraceful to human nature, let the truth still be told, — he had recurred to his primal satisfaction in the man as calamity capable of being used for such and such literary ends, and, while he pitied him, rejoiced in him as an episode of real life quite as striking and complete as anything in fiction. It was literature made to his hand. Nothing could be better, he mused ; and once more he passed the details of the story in review, and beheld all those pictures which the poor fellow's artless words had so vividly conjured up : he saw him leaping ashore in the gray summer dawn as soon as the ship hauled into the dock, and making his way, with his vague sea-legs unaccustomed to the pavements, up through the silent and empty city streets ; he imagined the tumult of fear and hope which the sight of the man's home must have caused in him, and the benumbing shock of finding it blind and deaf to all his appeals ; he saw him sitting down upon what had been his own threshold, and waiting in a sort of bewildered patience till the neighbors should be awake, while the noises of the streets gradually arose, and the wheels began to rattle over the stones, and the milk-man and the ice-man came and went, and the waiting figure began to be stared at, and to challenge the curiosity of the passing policeman ; he fancied the opening of the neighbor's door, and the slow, cold understanding of the case ; the manner, whatever it was, in which the sailor was told that one year before his wife had died, with her babe, and that his children were scattered, none knew where. As the contributor dwelt pityingly upon these

things, but at the same time estimated their æsthetic value one by one, he drew near the head of his street, and found himself a few paces behind a boy slouching onward through the night, to whom he called out, adventurously, and with no real hope of information, —

“Do you happen to know anybody on this street by the name of Hapford?”

“Why, no, not in this town,” said the boy; but he added that there was a street of the same name in a neighboring suburb, and that there was a Hapford living on it.

“By Jove!” thought the contributor, “this is more like literature than ever;” and he hardly knew whether to be more provoked at his own stupidity in not thinking of a street of the same name in the next village, or delighted at the element of fatality which the fact introduced into the story; for Tinker, according to his own account, must have landed from the cars a few rods from the very door he was seeking, and so walked farther and farther from it every moment. He thought the case so curious, that he laid it briefly before the boy, who, however he might have been inwardly affected, was sufficiently true to the national traditions not to make the smallest conceivable outward sign of concern in it.

At home, however, the contributor related his adventures and the story of Tinker’s life, adding the fact that he had just found out where Mr. Hapford lived. “It was the only touch wanting,” said he; “the whole thing is now perfect.”

“It’s *too* perfect,” was answered from a sad enthusiasm. “Don’t speak of it! I can’t take it in.”

“But the question is,” said the contributor, penitently taking himself to task for forgetting the hero

of these excellent misfortunes in his delight at their perfection, "how am I to sleep to-night, thinking of that poor soul's suspense and uncertainty? Never mind, — I'll be up early, and run over and make sure that it is Tinker's Hapford, before he gets out here, and have a pleasant surprise for him. Would it not be a justifiable *coup de théâtre* to fetch his daughter here, and let her answer his ring at the door when he comes in the morning?"

This plan was discouraged. "No, no; let them meet in their own way. Just take him to Hapford's house and leave him."

"Very well. But he's too good a character to lose sight of. He's got to come back here and tell us what he intends to do."

The birds, next morning, not having had the second mate on their minds either as an unhappy man or a most fortunate episode, but having slept long and soundly, were singing in a very sprightly way in the wayside trees; and the sweetness of their notes made the contributor's heart light as he climbed the hill and rang at Mr. Hapford's door.

The door was opened by a young girl of fifteen or sixteen, whom he knew at a glance for the second mate's daughter, but of whom, for form's sake, he asked if there were a girl named Julia Tinker living there.

"My name's Julia Tinker," answered the maid, who had rather a disappointing face.

"Well," said the contributor, "your father's got back from his Hong-Kong voyage."

"Hong-Kong voyage?" echoed the girl, with a stare of helpless inquiry, but no other visible emotion.

"Yes. He had never heard of your mother's death.

He came home yesterday morning, and was looking for you all day."

Julia Tinker remained open-mouthed but mute; and the other was puzzled at the want of feeling shown, which he could not account for even as a national trait. "Perhaps there's some mistake," he said.

"There must be," answered Julia: "my father hasn't been to sea for a good many years. *My* father," she added, with a diffidence indescribably mingled with a sense of distinction, — "*my* father's in State's Prison. What kind of looking man was this?"

The contributor mechanically described him.

Julia Tinker broke into a loud, hoarse laugh. "Yes, it's him, sure enough." And then, as if the joke were too good to keep: "Mis' Hapford, Mis' Hapford, father's got out. Do come here!" she called into a back room.

When Mrs. Hapford appeared, Julia fell back, and, having deftly caught a fly on the doorpost, occupied herself in plucking it to pieces, while she listened to the conversation of the others.

"It's all true enough," said Mrs. Hapford, when the writer had recounted the moving story of Jonathan Tinker, "so far as the death of his wife and baby goes. But he hasn't been to sea for a good many years, and he must have just come out of State's Prison, where he was put for bigamy. There's always two sides to a story, you know; but they say it broke his first wife's heart, and she died. His friends don't want him to find his children, and this girl especially."

"He's found his children in the city," said the

contributor gloomily, being at a loss what to do or say, in view of the wreck of his romance.

"Oh, he's found 'em, has he?" cried Julia, with heightened amusement. "Then he'll have me next, if I don't pack and go."

"I'm very, very sorry," said the contributor, secretly resolved never to do another good deed, no matter how temptingly the opportunity presented itself. "But you may depend he won't find out from *me* where you are. Of course I had no earthly reason for supposing his story was not true."

"Of course," said kind-hearted Mrs. Hapford, mingling a drop of honey with the gall in the contributor's soul, "you only did your duty."

And indeed, as he turned away, he did not feel altogether without compensation. However Jonathan Tinker had fallen in his esteem as a man, he had even risen as literature. The episode which had appeared so perfect in its pathetic phases did not seem less finished as a farce; and this person, to whom all things of every-day life presented themselves in periods more or less rounded, and capable of use as facts or illustrations, could not but rejoice in these new incidents, as dramatically fashioned as the rest. It occurred to him that, wrought into a story, even better use might be made of the facts now than before, for they had developed questions of character and of human nature which could not fail to interest. The more he pondered upon his acquaintance with Jonathan Tinker, the more fascinating the erring mariner became, in his complex truth and falsehood, his delicately blending shades of artifice and naïveté. He must, it was felt, have believed to a certain point in his own inventions: nay, starting with that groundwork of truth, —

the fact that his wife was really dead, and that he had not seen his family for two years, — why should he not place implicit faith in all the fictions reared upon it? It was probable that he felt a real sorrow for her loss, and that he found a fantastic consolation in depicting the circumstances of her death so that they should look like his inevitable misfortunes rather than his faults. He might well have repented his offence during those two years of prison; and why should he not now cast their dreariness and shame out of his memory, and replace them with the freedom and adventure of a two years' voyage to China, — so, probable, in all respects, that the fact should appear an impossible nightmare? In the experiences of his life he had abundant material to furnish forth the facts of such a voyage, and in the weariness and lassitude that should follow a day's walking equally after a two years' voyage and two years' imprisonment, he had as much physical proof in favor of one hypothesis as the other. It was doubtless true, also, as he said, that he had gone to his house at dawn, and sat down on the threshold of his ruined home; and perhaps he felt the desire he had expressed to see his daughter, with a purpose of beginning life anew; and it may have cost him a veritable pang when he found that his little ones did not know him. All the sentiments of the situation were such as might persuade a lively fancy of the truth of its own inventions; and as he heard these continually repeated by the contributor in their search for Mr. Hapford, they must have acquired an objective force and repute scarcely to be resisted. At the same time, there were touches of nature throughout Jonathan Tinker's narrative which could not fail to take the faith of another. The contributor, in re-

viewing it, thought it particularly charming that his mariner had not overdrawn himself, or attempted to paint his character otherwise than as it probably was; that he had shown his ideas and practices of life to be those of a second mate, nor more nor less, without the gloss of regret or the pretences to refinement that might be pleasing to the supposed philanthropist with whom he had fallen in. Captain Gooding was of course a true portrait; and there was nothing in Jonathan Tinker's statement of the relations of a second mate to his superiors and his inferiors which did not agree perfectly with what the contributor had just read in "*Two Years before the Mast*," — a book which had possibly cast its glamour upon the adventure. He admired also the just and perfectly characteristic air of grief in the bereaved husband and father, — those occasional escapes from the sense of loss into a brief hilarity and forgetfulness, and those relapses into the hovering gloom, which every one has observed in this poor, crazy human nature when oppressed by sorrow, and which it would have been hard to simulate. But, above all, he exulted in that supreme stroke of the imagination given by the second mate when, at parting, he said he believed he would go down and sleep on board the vessel. In view of this, the State's Prison theory almost appeared a malign and foolish scandal.

Yet even if this theory were correct, was the second mate wholly answerable for beginning his life again with the imposture he had practised? The contributor had either so fallen in love with the literary advantages of his forlorn deceiver that he would see no moral obliquity in him, or he had touched a subtler verity at last in pondering the affair. It seemed now

no longer a farce, but had a pathos which, though very different from that of its first aspect, was hardly less tragical. Knowing with what coldness, or, at the best, uncandor, he (representing Society in its attitude toward convicted Error) would have met the fact had it been owned to him at first, he had not virtue enough to condemn the illusory stranger, who must have been helpless to make at once evident any repentance he felt or good purpose he cherished. Was it not one of the saddest consequences of the man's past, — a dark necessity of misdoing, — that, even with the best will in the world to retrieve himself, his first endeavor must involve a wrong? Might he not, indeed, be considered a martyr, in some sort, to his own admirable impulses? I can see clearly enough where the contributor was astray in this reasoning, but I can also understand how one accustomed to value realities only as they resembled fables should be won with such pensive sophistry; and I can certainly sympathize with his feeling that the mariner's failure to reappear according to appointment added its final and most agreeable charm to the whole affair, and completed the mystery from which the man emerged and which swallowed him up again.

AT PADUA.

I.

THOSE of my readers who have frequented the garden of Doctor Rappaccini¹ no doubt recall with perfect distinctness the quaint old city of Padua. They remember its miles and miles of dim arcade over-roofing the sidewalks everywhere, affording excellent opportunity for the flirtation of lovers by day and the vengeance of rivals by night. They have seen the now vacant streets thronged with maskers, and the Venetian Podestà going in gorgeous state to and from the vast Palazzo della Ragione. They have witnessed ringing tournaments in those sad empty squares, and races in the Prato della Valle, and many other wonders of different epochs, and their pleasure makes me half sorry that I should have lived for several years within an hour by rail from Padua, and should know little or nothing of these great sights from actual observation. I take shame to myself for having visited Padua so often and so familiarly as I used to do, — for having been bored and hungry there, — for having had toothache there, upon one occasion, — for having rejoiced more in a cup of coffee at Pedrocchi's than in the whole history of Padua, — for having slept repeatedly in the bad-bedded hotels of Padua and never once dreamt of Portia, — for having been more taken by the

¹ In Hawthorne's tale of that name.

*salti mortali*¹ of a waiter who summed up my account at a Paduan restaurant, than by all the strategies with which the city has been many times captured and recaptured. Had I viewed Padua only over the wall of Doctor Rappaccini's garden, how different my impressions of the city would now be! This is one of the drawbacks of actual knowledge. "Ah! how can you write about Spain when once you have been there?" asked Heine of Théophile Gautier setting out on a journey thither.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that I remember something about Padua with a sort of romantic pleasure. There was a certain charm which I can dimly recall, in sauntering along the top of the old wall of the city, and looking down upon the plummy crests of the Indian corn that flourished up so mightily from the dry bed of the moat. At such times I could not help figuring to myself the many sieges that the wall had known, with the fierce assault by day, the secret attack by night, the swarming foe upon the plains below, the bristling arms of the besieged upon the wall, the boom of the great mortars made of ropes and leather and throwing mighty balls of stone, the stormy flight of arrows, the ladders planted against the defences and staggering headlong into the moat, enriched for future agriculture not only by its sluggish waters, but by the blood of many men. I suppose that most of these visions were old stage spectacles furbished up anew, and that my armies were chiefly equipped with their obsolete implements of warfare from museums of armor and from cabi-

¹ *Salti mortali* are those prodigious efforts of mental arithmetic by which Italian waiters, in verbally presenting your account, arrive at six as the product of two and two. W. D. H.

nets of antiquities ; but they were very vivid for all that.

I was never able, in passing a certain one of the city gates, to divest myself of an historic interest in the great loads of hay waiting admission on the outside. For an instant they masked again the Venetian troops that, in the War of the League of Cambray, entered the city in the hay-carts. shot down the landsknechts at the gates, and, uniting with the citizens, cut the German garrison to pieces. But it was a thing long past. The German garrison was here again ; and the heirs of the landsknechts went clanking through the gate to the parade-ground, with that fierce clamor of their kettledrums which is so much fiercer because unmingled with the noise of fifes. Once more now the Germans are gone, and, let us trust, forever ; but when I saw them, there seemed little hope of their going. They had a great Biergarten on the top of the wall, and they had set up the altars of their heavy Bacchus in many parts of the city.

I please myself with thinking that, if I walked on such a spring day as this in the arcaded Paduan streets, I should catch glimpses, through the gateways of the palaces, of gardens full of vivid bloom, and of fountains that tinkle there forever. If it were autumn, and I were in the great market-place before the Palazzo della Ragione, I should hear the baskets of amber-hued and honeyed grapes humming with the murmur of multitudinous bees, and making a music as if the wine itself were already singing in their gentle hearts. It is a great field of succulent verdure, that wide old market-place ; and fancy loves to browse about among its gay stores of fruits and

vegetables, brought thither by the world-old peasant-women who have been bringing fruits and vegetables to the Paduan market for so many centuries. They sit upon the ground before their great panniers, and knit and doze, and wake up with a drowsy "Comandala?"¹ as you linger to look at their grapes. They have each a pair of scales, — the emblem of Injustice, — and will weigh you out a scant measure of the fruit if you like. Their faces are yellow as parchment, and Time has written them so full of wrinkles that there is not room for another line. Doubtless these old parchment visages are palimpsests, and would tell the whole history of Padua if you could get at each successive inscription. Among their primal records there must be some account of the Roman city, as each little *contadinella* remembered it on market-days; and one might read of the terror of Attila's sack, a little later, with the peasant-maid's personal recollections of the bold Hunnish trooper who ate up the grapes in her basket, and kissed her hard, round red cheeks, — for in that time she was a blooming girl, — and paid nothing for either privilege. What wild and confused reminiscences on the wrinkled visage we should find thereafter of the fierce republican times, of Ecelino, of the Carraras, of the Venetian rule! And is it not sad to think of systems and peoples all passing away, and these ancient women lasting still, and still selling grapes in front of the Palazzo della Ragione? What a long mortality!

The youngest of their number is a thousand years older than the palace, which was begun in the twelfth century, and which is much the same now as it was when first completed. I know that, if I entered it, I

¹ "What can I do for you?"

should be sure of finding the great hall of the palace — the vastest hall in the world — dim and dull and dusty and delightful, with nothing in it except at one end Donatello's colossal marble-headed wooden horse of Troy, stared at from the other end by the two dog-faced Egyptian women in basalt placed there by Belzoni.

Late in the drowsy summer afternoons I should have the Court of the University all to myself, and might study unmolested the blazons of the noble youth who have attended the school in different centuries ever since 1200, and have left their escutcheons on the walls to commemorate them. At the foot of the stairway ascending to the schools from the court is the statue of the learned lady who was once a professor in the University, and who, if her likeness belie not her looks, must have given a great charm to student life in other times. At present there are no lady professors at Padua any more than at Harvard; and during late years the schools have suffered greatly from the interference of the Austrian government, which frequently closed them for months, on account of political demonstrations among the students. But now there is an end of this and many other stupid oppressions; and the time-honored University will doubtless regain its ancient importance. Even in 1864 it had nearly fifteen hundred students, and one met them everywhere under the arcades, and could not well mistake them, with that blended air of pirate and dandy which these studious young men loved to assume. They were to be seen a good deal on the promenades outside the walls, where the Paduan ladies are driven in their carriages in the afternoon, and where one sees the blood-horses and fine equi-

pages for which Padua is famous. There used once to be races in the Prato della Valle, after the Italian notion of horse-races; but these are now discontinued, and there is nothing to be found there but the statues of scholars and soldiers and statesmen, posted in a circle around the old race-course. If you strolled thither about dusk on such a day as this, you might see the statues unbend a little from their stony rigidity, and in the failing light nod to each other very pleasantly through the trees. And if you stayed in Padua over night, what could be better to-morrow morning than a stroll through the great Botanical Garden, — the oldest botanical garden in the world, — the garden which first received in Europe the strange and splendid growths of our hemisphere, — the garden where Doctor Rappaccini doubtless found the germ of his mortal plant?

On the whole, I believe I would rather go this moment to Padua than to Lowell or Lawrence, or even to Worcester; and as to the disadvantage of having seen Padua, I begin to think the whole place has now assumed so fantastic a character in my mind that I am almost as well qualified to write of it as if I had merely dreamed it.

The day that we first visited the city was very rainy, and we spent most of the time in viewing the churches. These, even after the churches of Venice, one finds rich in art and historic interest, and they in no instance fall into the maniacal excesses of the Renaissance to which some of the temples of the latter city abandon themselves. Their architecture forms a sort of border-land between the Byzantine of Venice and the Lombardic of Verona. The superb domes of St. Anthony's emulate those of St. Mark's; and the

porticoes of other Paduan churches rest upon the backs of bird-headed lions and leopards that fascinate with their mystery and beauty.

It was the wish to see the attributive Giotto's in the Chapter which drew us first to St. Anthony's, and we saw them with the satisfaction naturally attending the contemplation of frescoes discovered only since 1858, after having been hidden under plaster and whitewash for many centuries; but we could not believe that Giotto's fame was destined to gain much by their rescue from oblivion. They are in nowise to be compared with this master's frescoes in the Chapel of the Annunziata, — which, indeed, is in every way a place of wonder and delight. You reach it by passing through a garden lane bordered with roses, and a taciturn gardener comes out with clinking keys, and lets you into the chapel, where there is nobody but Giotto and Dante, nor seems to have been for ages. Cool it is, and of a pulverous smell, as a sacred place should be; a blessed benching goes round the walls, and you sit down and take unlimited comfort in the frescoes. The gardener leaves you alone to the solitude and the silence, in which the talk of the painter and the exile is plain enough. Their contemporaries and yours are cordial in their gay companionship: through the half-open door falls, in a pause of the rain, the same sunshine that they saw lie there; the deathless birds that they heard sing out in the garden trees; it is the fresh sweetness of the grass mown so many hundred years ago that breathes through all the lovely garden grounds.

But in the midst of this pleasant communion with the past, you have a lurking pain; for you have hired your brougham by the hour; and you presently quit the Chapel of Giotto on this account.

We had chosen our driver from among many other drivers of broughams in the vicinity of Pedrocchi's, because he had such an honest look, and was not likely, we thought, to deal unfairly with us.

"But first," said the signor who had selected him, "how much is your brougham an hour?"

So and so.

"Show me the tariff of fares."

"There is no tariff."

"There is. Show it to me."

"It is lost, signor."

"I think not. It is here in this pocket. Get it out."

The tariff appears, and with it the fact that he had demanded just what the boatman of the ballad received in gift, — thrice his fee.¹

The driver mounted his seat, and served us so faithfully that day in Padua that we took him the next day for Arquà. At the end, when he had received his due, and a handsome *mancia* besides, he was still unsatisfied, and referred to the tariff in proof that he had been under-paid. On that confronted and defeated, he thanked us very cordially, gave us the number of his brougham, and begged us to ask for him when we came next to Padua and needed a carriage.

From the Chapel of the Annunziata he drove us to the Church of Santa Giustina, where is a very famous and noble picture by Romanino. But as this writing has nothing in the world to do with art, I here dismiss that subject, and with a gross and idle delight follow the sacristan down under the church to the prison of Santa Giustina.

Of all the faculties of the mind, there is none so

¹ Uhland's ballad, "The Passage," translated by Sarah Austen.

little fatiguing to exercise as mere wonder; and, for my own sake, I try always to wonder at things without the least critical reservation. I therefore, in the sense of deglutition, bolted this prison at once, though subsequent experiences led me to look with grave indignation upon the whole idea of prisons, their authenticity, and even their existence.

As far as mere dimensions are concerned, the prison of Santa Giustina was not a hard one to swallow, being only three feet wide by about ten feet in length. In this limited space, Santa Giustina passed five years of the paternal reign of Nero (a virtuous and a long-suffering prince, whom, singularly enough, no historic artist has yet arisen to whitewash), and was then brought out into the larger cell adjoining, to suffer a blessed martyrdom. I am not sure now whether the sacristan said she was dashed to death on the stones, or cut to pieces with knives; but whatever the form of martyrdom, an iron ring in the ceiling was employed in it, as I know from seeing the ring, — a curiously well-preserved piece of ironmongery. Within the narrow prison of the saint, and just under the grating, through which the sacristan thrust his candle to illuminate it, was a mountain of candle-drippings, — a monument to the fact that faith still largely exists in this doubting world. My own credulity, not only with regard to this prison, but also touching the coffin of St. Luke, which I saw in the church, had so wrought upon the esteem of the sacristan, that he now took me to a well, into which, he said, had been cast the bones of three thousand Christian martyrs. He lowered a lantern into the well, and assured me that, if I looked through a certain screenwork there, I could see the bones. On experiment I could not see the bones,

but this circumstance did not cause me to doubt their presence, particularly as I did see upon the screen a great number of coins offered for the repose of the martyrs' souls. I threw down some *soldi*, and thus enthralled the sacristan.

If the signor cared to see prisons, he said, the driver must take him to those of Ecelino, at present the property of a private gentleman near by. As I had just bought a history of Ecelino, at a great bargain, from a second-hand book-stall, and had a lively interest in all the enormities of that nobleman, I sped the driver instantly to the villa of the Signor P——.

It depends here altogether upon the freshness or mustiness of the reader's historical reading whether he cares to be reminded more particularly who Ecelino was. He flourished balefully in the early half of the thirteenth century as lord of Vicenza, Verona, Padua, and Brescia, and was defeated and hurt to death in an attempt to possess himself of Milan. He was in every respect a remarkable man for that time, — fearless, abstemious, continent, avaricious, hardy, and unspeakably ambitious and cruel. He survived and suppressed innumerable conspiracies, escaping even the thrust of the assassin whom the fame of his enormous wickedness had caused the Old Man of the Mountain¹ to send against him. As lord of Padua he was more incredibly severe and bloody in his rule than as lord of the other cities, for the Paduans had been latest free, and conspired the most frequently against him. He extirpated whole families on suspicion that a single member had been concerned in a meditated revolt. Little children and helpless women suffered hideous

¹ The title given to a Mohammedan chief who ruled a sect that in the west was known as the sect of the Assassins.

mutilation and shame at his hands. Six prisons in Padua were constantly filled by his arrests. The whole country was traversed by witnesses of his cruelties, — men and women deprived of an arm or leg, and begging from door to door. He had long been excommunicated ; at last the Church proclaimed a crusade against him, and his lieutenant and nephew — more demoniacal, if possible, than himself — was driven out of Padua while he was operating against Mantua. Ecelino retired to Verona, and maintained a struggle against the crusade for nearly two years longer, with a courage which never failed him. Wounded and taken prisoner, the soldiers of the victorious army gathered about him, and heaped insult and reproach upon him ; and one furious peasant, whose brother's feet had been cut off by Ecelino's command, dealt the helpless monster four blows upon the head with a scythe. By some Ecelino is said to have died of these wounds alone ; but by others it is related that his death was a kind of suicide, inasmuch as he himself put the case past surgery by tearing off the bandages from his hurts, and refusing all medicines.

II.

Entering at the enchanted portal of the Villa P——, we found ourselves in a realm of wonder. It was our misfortune not to see the magician who compelled all the marvels on which we looked, but for that very reason, perhaps, we have the clearest sense of his greatness. Everywhere we beheld the evidences of his ingenious but lugubrious fancy, which everywhere tended to a monumental and mortuary effect. A sort of vestibule first received us, and beyond this dripped

and glimmered the garden. The walls of the vestibule were covered with inscriptions setting forth the sentiments of the philosophy and piety of all ages concerning life and death; we began with Confucius, and we ended with Benjamin Franklin. But as if these ideas of mortality were not sufficiently depressing, the funereal Signor P—— had collected into earthen *amphoræ* the ashes of the most famous men of ancient and modern times, and arranged them so that a sense of their number and variety should at once strike his visitor. Each jar was conspicuously labelled with the name its illustrious dust had borne in life; and if one escaped with comparative cheerfulness from the thought that Seneca had died, there were in the very next pot the cinders of Napoleon to bully him back to a sense of his mortality.

We were glad to have the gloomy fascination of these objects broken by the custodian, who approached to ask if we wished to see the prisons of Ecelino, and we willingly followed him into the rain out of our sepulchral shelter.

Between the vestibule and the towers of the tyrant lay that garden already mentioned, and our guide led us through ranks of weeping statuary, and rainy bowers, and showery lanes of shrubbery, until we reached the door of his cottage. While he entered to fetch the key to the prisons, we noted that the towers were freshly painted and in perfect repair; and indeed the custodian said frankly enough, on reappearing, that they were merely built over the prisons on the site of the original towers. The storied stream of the Bacchiglione sweeps through the grounds, and now, swollen by the rainfall, it roared, a yellow torrent, under a corner of the prisons. The towers rise from

masses of foliage, and form no unpleasing feature of what must be, in spite of Signor P——, a delightful Italian garden in sunny weather. The ground is not so flat as elsewhere in Padua, and this inequality gives an additional picturesqueness to the place. But as we were come in search of horrors, we scorned these merely lovely things, and hastened to immure ourselves in the dungeons below. The custodian, lighting a candle (which ought, we felt, to have been a torch), went before.

We found the cells, though narrow and dark, not uncomfortable, and the guide conceded that they had undergone some repairs since Ecelino's time. But all the horrors for which we had come were there in perfect grisliness, and labelled by the ingenious Signor P—— with Latin inscriptions.

In the first cell was a shrine of the Virgin, set in the wall. Beneath this, while the wretched prisoner knelt in prayer, a trap-door opened and precipitated him upon the points of knives, from which his body fell into the *Bacchiglione* below. In the next cell, held by some rusty iron rings to the wall, was a skeleton, hanging by the wrists.

"This," said the guide, "was another punishment of which Ecelino was very fond."

A dreadful doubt seized my mind. "Was this skeleton found here?" I demanded.

Without faltering an instant, without so much as winking an eye, the custodian replied, "*Appunto.*"¹

It was a great relief, and restored me to confidence in the establishment. I am at a loss to explain how my faith should have been confirmed afterwards by coming upon a guillotine, — an awful instrument in

¹ "Assuredly."

the likeness of a straw-cutter, with a decapitated wooden figure under its blade, — which the custodian confessed to be a modern improvement placed there by Signor P——. Yet my credulity was so strengthened by his candor, that I accepted without hesitation the torture of the water-drop when we came to it. The water-jar was as well preserved as if placed there but yesterday, and the skeleton beneath it — found as we saw it — was entire and perfect.

In the adjoining cell sat a skeleton — found as we saw it — with its neck in the clutch of the garrote, which was one of Ecelino's more merciful punishments; while in still another cell the ferocity of the tyrant appeared in the penalty inflicted upon the wretch whose skeleton had been hanging for ages — as we saw it — head downwards from the ceiling.

Beyond these, in a yet darker and drearier dungeon, stood a heavy oblong wooden box, with two apertures near the top, peering through which we found that we were looking into the eyeless sockets of a skull. Within this box Ecelino had immured the victim we beheld there, and left him to perish in view of the platters of food and goblets of drink placed just beyond the reach of his hands. The food we saw was of course not the original food.

At last we came to the crowning horror of Villa P——, the supreme excess of Ecelino's cruelty. The guide entered the cell before us, and, as we gained the threshold, threw the light of his taper vividly upon a block that stood in the middle of the floor. Fixed to the block by an immense spike driven through from the back was the little slender hand of a woman, which lay there just as it had been struck from the living arm, and which, after the lapse of so

many centuries, was still as perfectly preserved as if it had been embalmed. The sight had a most cruel fascination ; and while one of the horror-seekers stood helplessly conjuring to his vision that scene of unknown dread, — the shrinking, shrieking woman dragged to the block, the wild, shrill, horrible screech following the blow that drove in the spike, the merciful swoon after the mutilation, — his companion, with a sudden pallor, demanded to be taken instantly away.

In their swift withdrawal, they only glanced at a few detached instruments of torture, — all original Ecelinos, but intended for the infliction of minor and comparatively unimportant torments. — and then they passed from that place of fear.

III.

In the evening we sat talking at the Caffè Pedrocchi with an abbate, an acquaintance of ours, who was a Professor in the University of Padua. Pedrocchi's is the great caffè of Padua, a granite edifice of Egyptian architecture, which is the mausoleum of the proprietor's fortune. The pecuniary skeleton at the feast, however, does not much trouble the guests. They begin early in the evening to gather into the elegant saloons of the caffè, — somewhat too large for so small a city as Padua, — and they sit there late in the night over their cheerful cups and their ices, with their newspapers and their talk. Not so many ladies are to be seen as at the caffè in Venice, for it is only in the greater cities that they go much to these public places. There are few students at Pedrocchi's, for they frequent the cheaper caffè ; but you may nearly always find there some Professor of

the University, and on the evening of which I speak there were two present besides our abbate. Our friend's great passion was the English language, which he understood too well to venture to speak a great deal. He had been translating from that tongue into Italian certain American poems, and our talk was of these at first. Then we began to talk of distinguished American writers, of whom intelligent Italians always know at least four, in this succession, — Cooper, Mrs. Stowe, Longfellow, and Irving. Mrs. Stowe's *Capanna di Zio Tom* is, of course, universally read; and my friend had also read *Il Fiore di Maggio*, — "The May-flower." Of Longfellow, the "Evangeline" is familiar to Italians, through a translation of the poem; but our abbate knew all the poet's works, and one of the other professors present that evening had made such faithful study of them as to have produced some translations rendering the original with remarkable fidelity and spirit. I have before me here his *brochure*, printed last year at Padua, and containing versions of "Enceladus," "Excelsior," "A Psalm of Life," "The Old Clock on the Stairs," "Sand of the Desert in an Hour-Glass," "Twilight," "Daybreak," "The Quadroon Girl," and "Torquemada," — pieces which give the Italians a fair notion of our poet's lyrical range, and which bear witness to Professor Messadaglia's sympathetic and familiar knowledge of his works. A young and gifted lady of Parma, now unhappily no more, lately published a translation of "The Golden Legend;" and Professor Messadaglia, in his Preface, mentions a version of another of our poet's longer works on which the translator of the "Evangeline" is now engaged.

At last, turning from literature, we spoke with the gentle abbate of our day's adventures, and eagerly related that of the Ecelino prisons. To have seen them was the most terrific pleasure of our lives.

"Eh!" said our friend, "I believe you."

"We mean those under the Villa P——."

"Exactly."

There was a tone of politely suppressed amusement in the abbate's voice; and after a moment's pause, in which we felt our awful experience slipping and sliding away from us, we ventured to say, "You don't mean that those are *not* the veritable Ecelino prisons?"

"Certainly they are nothing of the kind. The Ecelino prisons were destroyed when the Crusaders took Padua, with the exception of the tower, which the Venetian Republic converted into an observatory."

"But at least these prisons are on the site of Ecelino's castle?"

"Nothing of the sort. His castle in that case would have been outside of the old city walls."

"And those tortures and the prisons are all" —

"Things got up for show. No doubt Ecelino used such things, and many worse, of which even the ingenuity of Signor P—— cannot conceive. But he is an eccentric man, loving the horrors of history, and what he can do to realize them he has done in his prisons."

"But the custodian — how could he lie so?"

Our friend shrugged his shoulders. "Eh! easily. And perhaps he even believed what he said."

The world began to assume an aspect of bewildering ungenuineness, and there seemed to be a treacherous quality of fiction in the ground under our feet. Even the play at the pretty little Teatro Sociale

where we went to pass the rest of the evening appeared hollow and improbable. . We thought the hero something of a bore, with his patience and goodness; and as for the heroine, pursued by the attentions of the rich profligate, we doubted if she were any better than she should be.

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